

USC Rossier

MAGAZINE

USC ROSSIER SCHOOL OF EDUCATION MAGAZINE : SPRING / SUMMER 2022

OFF CAMPUS



**Our impact on
our community
and beyond**

In Conversation

Margo Pensavalle on teacher training that meets the moment **P. 30**

The Future Teachers of L.A.

Meet the first class of USC Rossier's teacher residency program **P. 32**

Creating Community at the Crenshaw Family YMCA

Doctoral student Veda Ramsay-Stamps MPA '18 finds her way back to L.A. **P. 24**

Turning Around the Teacher Crisis

New residency program prepares teachers for L.A. classrooms **P. 14**

Diverse Contracting at USC

Michèle G. Turner BS '81, EdD '14 leads new office to increase opportunities for local businesses **P. 19**

ILLUSTRATION BY EDMON DE HARO. PHOTO BY MARK HOLTZMAN.



Autumn, a student in the Crenshaw YMCA's after-school program, measures the structure she built for a bridge building challenge. To learn more about the Crenshaw YMCA, led by doctoral candidate Veda Ramsay-Stamps MPA '18, see p. 24.

DEAN'S BYLINE

Dear Friends,



Given our location in South Los Angeles, USC's history of service to the communities that surround us has been vital to the mission and character of the university. Examination of our work reveals that our contributions may well be unparalleled. No other major private American university that I am aware of is as closely connected,

or has as many community partnerships, as USC.

USC Rossier plays a leading role in this work through our training of educators and our on-the-ground research with schools, districts and community groups. We designed and developed USC Hybrid High College Prep and the other successful Ednovate schools serving historically disadvantaged communities. We train and place teachers and principals in local schools, and deploy college advisers through our USC College Advising Corps. We also support Math for America LA in providing vital resources to mathematics and computer science teachers.

Today, USC Rossier is stepping up to address profound challenges that have emerged during the pandemic. We are forming new partnerships, including several designed to address the national teacher shortage. We teamed with President Carol L. Folt to provide 20 full-ride scholarships to Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) students, many of whom will teach in USC Neighborhood Academic Initiative (NAI) schools. The 20 scholarships are in addition to those already offered in partnership with Los Angeles Unified School District through our Teacher Preparation Residency program. Now, USC Rossier is able to fully fund two-thirds of enrolled MAT students. In addition, math education professor Angela Laila Hasan is leading the expansion of the NAI partnership to include summer mathematics enrichment for middle schoolers, right here on our campus.

The Democracy Project is an initiative I've championed as a response to threats to the democratic foundations of our society. So many Americans have trouble distinguishing facts from fake news, and too many are manipulated by misinformation. Under the leadership of professors Robert Filback and Jenifer Crawford, the Democracy Project is curating course materials to help students obtain California's new State Seal of Civic Engagement.

In higher education, Professor Adrian H. Huerta is leading a partnership with Long Beach City College to provide educational support to formerly gang-affiliated youth. And on the nonprofit side, Veda Ramsay-Stamps, a Global Executive EdD student, is expanding learning opportunities through an innovative approach to after-school education at the Crenshaw Family YMCA.

Investing and embedding our work in the needs of the community is central to our mission. Amid one of the most uncertain periods our nation has faced, USC Rossier is building on our rich history of community partnerships to use education as a force for positive change.

Fight On!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pedro Noguera". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Pedro A. Noguera, PhD
Distinguished Professor of Education
Emery Stoops and Joyce King Stoops Dean
USC Rossier School of Education

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EDITOR'S NOTE



What do universities owe their communities?

The campus of USC sits on some 229 acres in the South Los Angeles neighborhood of University Park. With its 49,500 students, 4,700 full-time faculty and nearly 17,000 staff, USC is one of L.A.'s biggest employers and

a global leader in research across numerous disciplines. The university is an essential part of L.A.'s economy and produces knowledge that shapes the way we see the world. But how can USC, or any university, ensure these riches extend beyond its campus gates? And, at the same time, how can the cultural richness of the South L.A. communities around USC be preserved, celebrated and represented at the university?

Perhaps more than any other academic institutions, schools of education, by design, are intimately tied to the world outside of their campuses. After all, the teachers who are trained by schools such as USC Rossier are charged with educating future generations. Educators are intimately attuned to the needs of their communities, and teachers are in the unique position to discern which student needs are being met—and those that aren't.

USC Rossier is particularly well positioned to lead the way in showing how universities can and should show up to the communities they exist in. From the USC Rossier-trained superintendents who oversee districts in the L.A. area to the legions of USC Rossier-trained teachers working in L.A. classrooms, our graduates are intimately connected to the communities they serve. Our faculty and research centers also seek to uncover ways we can better serve the children of our communities, from providing new paths to formerly gang-associated youth to finding better ways to teach the fundamentals of democracy in public schools. In this issue, we explore the wide and varied work—past, present and emerging—of USC Rossier graduates, faculty and students in the communities near and around USC.

Kianoosh Hashemzadeh, Editor

14



ILLUSTRATION BY EDMON DE HARO

TABLE OF CONTENTS



24

FEATURES

Turning Around the Teacher Crisis 14

As teacher shortages trouble the nation, USC Rossier's new teaching residency program aims to prepare educators for the challenges of L.A. classrooms and create a more diverse workforce.

By Ellen Evaristo

Building the Foundation for Economic Opportunity 19

Michèle G. Turner BS '81, EdD '14 is blazing a path forward for diverse contracting at USC.

By Adriana Maestas

With Veda Ramsay-Stamps MPA '18 at the Helm, the Crenshaw Family YMCA Has Become an Essential Hub for the Community 24

After a career in public policy took this Global EdD student from Washington, D.C., to Fresno, Calif., Ramsay-Stamps found her way back to the heart of L.A.

By Kianoosh Hashemzadeh

The Future Teachers of Los Angeles 32

Meet the first class of USC Rossier's new Teacher Preparation Residency program.

By Nadra Kareem Nittle

↑

Students in the Crenshaw Family YMCA's after-school program, Kelman (left) and Ghavin (right), enjoy snacks over a game of chess.

STORY IDEAS? FEEDBACK?

Please write to us at communications@rossier.usc.edu



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DEPARTMENTS

Dean's Byline	1	Opinion	38
Editor's Note	2	Jerry Lucido	
Rossier News	4	Bookshelf	39
Tips for Educators	13	Alumni News	40
Courtney Malloy		Rossier Supporters	48
In Conversation	30		
Margo Pensavalle			

USC Hybrid High turns 10

By Elaine Woo

WHEN USC HYBRID HIGH COLLEGE PREP OPENED in 2012, little about it was traditional, beginning with its location: the ground floor of the bustling World Trade Center in downtown Los Angeles.

“We were a bunch of kids surrounded by all these professionals,” recalled Junior Pena, one of the 90 students from South Los Angeles who formed Hybrid’s inaugural freshman class. “But it was cool to be around them. It elevated our mindset.”

Setting his sights on top-flight colleges, Pena landed at USC, where he earned degrees in math and physics in 2020 before pursuing a doctorate at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Hybrid High moved ahead, too. After surmounting early challenges and building its own campus—a light-filled, two-story structure across from the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum—the school will celebrate its 10th anniversary this fall.

Developed under the auspices of the USC Rossier School of Education and conceived in part to serve students from the neighborhoods surrounding USC, Hybrid is the first of six public, college-preparatory high schools that form the Ednovate network, which focuses on preparing students from traditionally underserved communities for higher education.

Ninety-eight percent of Ednovate’s enrollment are students of color—primarily Latinx—while 82 percent come from low-income backgrounds.

Since its first graduation in 2016, Hybrid has achieved a 100 percent college acceptance rate every year except 2020 and 2021, when the rate dipped to 99 percent. Hybrid grads attend college with a persistence rate on par with the national average of 83 percent, according to the National Student Clearinghouse.

Hybrid’s distinctions include a 2018 U.S. News & World Report ranking as one of California’s 100 best high schools. Last year, the California Department of Education named Hybrid a California Distinguished School for exceptional



student performance and closing the achievement gap. “Part of our celebration is that in 10 years Hybrid has become one of the top high schools in the country, the city and the state,” said Olumide “Mac” Macaulay, Ednovate’s chief of schools, who was Hybrid’s principal for six years.

There have been stumbling blocks. Many students weren’t ready for the autonomy under Hybrid’s initial plan: to operate up to 12 hours a day, seven days a week, with personalized, self-paced learning—much of it online. “It was not conducive to building a strong school culture,” Macaulay said. Hybrid leaders were able to leverage a deep USC network to adjust the school’s approach with input from then-Dean Karen Gallagher, who was Ednovate’s founding chair, and other experts from USC Rossier. By the end of the second year, Hybrid moved to a more structured approach, which helped lift academic performance. Soon, Hybrid had a long waiting list.

For Rachael DeRogatis, who became principal in 2020, moving Hybrid to its own campus more than three years ago was another major achievement. Hybrid is now located in University Park, just a block from USC.

Being so close to USC “changed our ability to utilize USC as a true partner,” she said. The proximity has made it easier for students to research assignments at Doheny Library, for example, and take undergraduate classes in subjects including transportation and journalism.

Pena spent hours at USC working on his senior thesis even though Hybrid hadn’t yet moved to University Park in 2016. The opportunity to soak up the college atmosphere was invaluable, he said, “because it made that vision of me as a college student something that was actually attainable.”

—R

↑ USC Hybrid High salutatorian Ramon Calvillo delivers his graduation speech in 2021. He is now a freshman at USC.

PHOTO COURTESY OF USC HYBRID HIGH / MICHAEL SHORTS

LBCC and Pullias Center to provide new educational horizon to gang-associated youth

By Ellen Evaristo

GANGS EXIST IN 57 OF 58 CALIFORNIA COUNTIES, and an estimated 50,000 school-age California youth are gang-involved, according to a 2014 study. USC Rossier Assistant Professor of Education Adrian H. Huerta, a national expert on college-access pathways for gang-associated youth, has found that gangs often leave an indelible imprint on their communities.

Long Beach City College (LBCC) and the USC Rossier School of Education's Pullias Center for Higher Education hope to change that with a recently awarded grant from the U.S. Department of Education (DOE). The two institutions have collaborated to create the LBCC Phoenix Scholars, with a mission to promote and support higher education efforts for gang-associated youth in the greater Long Beach area. The nearly \$1 million grant, from the DOE's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, will support these efforts for the next three years.

"Hypothetically, during the years of the grant, we could potentially support hundreds of people through the LBCC Phoenix Scholars program," said Huerta. "If we are able to help 250 people graduate from high school or obtain a GED, certificate or associate's degree, we could change a generation of people and support them towards an upward trajectory." Huerta said this upward trajectory for young people with a history of gang involvement could result in less money spent on social services and criminal justice, and lower rates of welfare dependency. Moreover, it could "create a global shift in perspective in supporting gang-associated youth and young adults," he added.

Huerta, who is affiliated with the USC Pullias Center, is co-principal investigator for LBCC Phoenix Scholars. The program will include a series of support systems within LBCC and the surrounding community that will promote successful post-gang life for youth and adults ages 16 to 24.

"This is a holistic, asset-based approach to support gang-involved youth," said Huerta. "The LBCC Phoenix Scholars aims to contribute to dismantling the school-to-prison nexus, provide a pathway for jobs and a college education, and support families of the youth impacted by gangs."

Huerta is mindful that students are taking a calculated risk themselves by participating in this program. "This would be a massive identity shift for students who participate—to see themselves as a college student," Huerta said. The LBCC Phoenix Scholars will involve trust and confidence building, in addition to constant reminders that students have agency over, are entitled to and deserve an education.

Huerta's message to the incoming scholars is this: "Give yourself grace for all the possible mistakes that you made as a young person. We are also there to give you grace and space to make mistakes, and also support you to graduate from either high school or college." —R

THE BURNING QUESTION THAT LIT THE WAY

How do you create new educational pathways for gang-associated youth? Adrian H. Huerta has considered this question throughout his academic career.

The question was on his mind as he pursued his bachelor's in human services at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. There, he interned at a juvenile correctional facility for a semester, interacting with children and young adults who were often ignored and minoritized. After earning his master's from The Ohio State University, Huerta went on to work as a USC Rossier academic adviser and then was appointed assistant director of the McNair Scholars Program, which provides scholarships to first-generation students and those from underrepresented backgrounds.

As Huerta pursued his PhD at UCLA, he focused on understanding how Latino boys and young men acquire and make sense of gang and college knowledge. He joined USC Rossier in 2017 as a provost's postdoctoral scholar with the Pullias Center for Higher Education with support from Founding Director William G. Tierney; he is now a tenure-track assistant professor. Recently, he joined the inaugural cohort of the Health Equity Fellowship for Trainees, a new program from *Health Affairs*, a leading journal of health policy thought and research. The program's mission is to increase the quantity and quality of manuscripts by researchers who are members of racial and ethnic minorities.

Huerta's interest in creating new educational pathways for those all too often left behind has been there from the start of his career. Over his decade of scholarship, "the question kept progressing and progressing," Huerta said. And while there are many possible answers to the question that's burned in his mind for years, the newly launched LBCC Phoenix Scholars has provided a solid one.





Democracy Project to strengthen student civic engagement

By Kianoosh Hashemzadeh

IN A SURVEY CONDUCTED LAST SEPTEMBER, the Pew Research Center found that nearly 60 percent of Americans who speak about politics with those they disagree with reported the conversations as “stressful and frustrating.” It’s hard to recall a time when the thought of talking politics or any subject deemed divisive—from mask mandates to what books are taught in schools—could create such anxiety.

Democracy, however, is born from the fruitful discussion and exchange of ideas. How then can we encourage political

discussion and civic engagement in a way that doesn’t cause undue stress and, at the same time, help bolster the very ideals upon which our nation was founded?

In 1916, John Dewey wrote, “Democracy has to be born anew every generation, and education is its midwife.” A new initiative from the USC Rossier School of Education, the Democracy Project, aims to course-correct, with a mission to strengthen students’ knowledge, skills and capacities so that they can become engaged citizens in their communities.

The project, co-chaired by Jenifer Crawford and Robert Filback, both professors of clinical education at USC Rossier, is in its strategic planning phase. Since the fall, the duo has been conducting extensive listening sessions with teachers, district leaders and community organizers, working together to consider ways to leverage existing educational materials. Their goal is twofold: They want to make these resources easy for civics educators to use in their classrooms, and they want to align these resources with criteria required for the California State Seal of Civic Engagement, an award unveiled in 2020 that aims to incentivize students to become informed and active citizens.

“There are a ton of great materials,” Crawford says. “Teachers don’t just want more resources. They want resources that are going to help students achieve [the seal]. We’re trying to bring all these existing resources together, and [put them] in a framework that is user-friendly and aligned with [the seal].” They also want to go about the process in an equitable way, “centering equity and inclusion in the process,” Crawford says.

As the two professors create this package of course materials, they will turn to the wealth of material generated by other USC entities, including the USC Center for Political Futures and the USC Shoah Foundation. Other resource partners include the News Literacy Project and the Constitutional Rights Foundation.

They also plan to facilitate a series of “learning exchanges,” where key stakeholders—teachers, parents, students, superintendents and other community members—gather to discuss the guiding question, “What does democracy look like to you?” Through the learning exchanges, Filback says, they aim “to give [participants] something tangible, particularly in this very fraught time that we’re in, where so many discussions around school are politicized.” The exchanges will also offer opportunities for information gathering, which Filback believes will help shape how and what educational resources are included in the course package.

A recent grant from the Stuart Foundation has provided funding for a project specialist, a position held by Robert Medrano EDD ’20. Medrano, a social studies teacher at Culver City Middle School, completed his dissertation research on effective civics instructional practices for 12th grade Latinx students. Medrano is working with Crawford and Filback to develop a civics course model, and he hopes the project will provide students with “increased opportunities to engage in relevant and meaningful learning experiences that lead to greater political efficacy.” —R

Margaret Chidester EdD '95 inducted into DSAG Hall of Fame, 4 EdD students awarded scholarships

By Ellen Evaristo

ON JAN. 27, AT AN AWARDS CEREMONY HELD IN PALM SPRINGS, CALIF., the 2022 Dean's Superintendent Advisory Group inducted longtime educator and USC Rossier Professor Margaret Chidester EdD '95 into the DSAG Hall of Fame.

"This year, we pay tribute to an exceptional member of DSAG who served our community in important ways," said Dean Pedro A. Noguera. "Congratulations to Maggie on a well-deserved recognition of her service to our community of education leaders."

Chidester has represented California school districts, charter schools and related education entities as counsel since 1981, and at her law offices since 2000 in partnership with her husband, Steven. She has taught in USC Rossier's Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership program, and has served on the USC Rossier Board of Councilors since 2000.

"Although USC Rossier has evolved markedly since my years as an EdD student and, later, adjunct professor, some things in our profession have changed little since I taught English learners in downtown Santa Ana in the 1970s," Chidester said. "Today's students in Santa Ana and their counterparts all over the state still need and deserve our utmost support to achieve their potential. In accordance with USC Rossier's mission statement 'to prepare leaders to achieve educational equity through practice, research and policy,' we can do no less."

The DSAG Endowed Scholarships, given annually to EdD students who aspire to the position of superintendent, were awarded to Christa Glembocki, principal of Dwyer Middle School in the Huntington School District; Marie Williams, instructional superintendent in the Fresno Unified School District; Michael Romero, superintendent of Local District South in the Los Angeles Unified School District; and Carlos Montes, Rivera Community of Schools Administrator in Local District South in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Montes' scholarship was awarded through a partnership with the TELACU Education Foundation, whose mission is to equip Latino/Latina scholars with the tools they need to effect positive change in their communities. —R



→ Margaret Chidester speaks at her induction into the Hall of Fame at the DSAG awards dinner in January 2022.

PHOTO BY BRIAN MORRI, 211 PHOTOGRAPHY

How to lead in a crisis

By Brian Sokia

Education leaders face historic challenges. As the pandemic drags on, schools race to contain the damage. Meanwhile, mask and vaccine mandates combined with issues of racial equity have mobilized a relatively small but disruptive opposition to leadership.

In the online event "How Education Leaders Can 'Break Through' Troubled Times," part of USC Rossier's *A New Vision for Schools* webinar series, K-12 superintendents and educational experts gathered to offer guidance for practitioners and policymakers facing these challenges.

Key takeaways:

MAINTAIN CIVILITY

- Have civilized dialogue (preferably in person) with opponents of school policies
- Establish protocols for how the school board and superintendent should respond to disruption
- The loudest critics typically do not represent the community as a whole. Direct policy toward the quiet majority.

BE STRATEGIC ABOUT ADDRESSING LEARNING LOSS

- Use supplemental supports, including nonprofits and community organizations, to address individual student needs
- Acknowledge the problems with comparing pre-pandemic test scores with pandemic-era test scores; mind the historic disparities in student achievement
- Achievement should be measured by what is grade-level appropriate

PRIORITIZE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- Tap federal stimulus funds to hire more counselors or build counselor pipeline
- Create a data system to identify students with indicators (homelessness, foster care, etc.), and those who haven't received assessment
- Invest in early childhood education

LEAD WITH A MISSION TO SERVE ALL STUDENTS

- Ensure students have WiFi access at home
- Increase communication with families
- Address learning and behavior disruptions exacerbated by the pandemic

📶 To view the webinars, please visit rsoe.in/newvision.

The Making of a Therapist

As she built a life in America, international student Amy Henderson found her vocation in USC Rossier’s Marriage and Family Therapy program

By Margaret Crane

“I DIDN’T KNOW ANYONE IN THE UNITED STATES when I first moved here,” says Amy Henderson. “That was really scary, but at the same time, I was learning to create my own community.”

Henderson is completing her second year of USC Rossier’s Master of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) program. The daughter of British parents, she grew up in Dubai and left home in 2016 to attend the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), as an undergraduate.

She had been taught almost nothing about American history at her British school in Dubai. Upon arriving in the United States, Henderson was catapulted into the midst of America’s tumultuous 2016 election year. The day after the presidential inauguration, she watched the first Women’s March unfold in cities across the nation. Having grown up in a majority Muslim country, she was deeply disturbed by the ban on Muslims traveling to the U.S., enacted via executive order by former President Donald Trump.

Being alone in a new country created mental health issues that led Henderson to undergo therapy for the first time. “That opened my eyes,” she says. “College-age students are going through huge transitions. This is one of the reasons why I’d like to work with them in the future, whether on a university campus or in a community health agency.”

Motivated to create change, Henderson volunteered as a sexual assault response team advocate at the Center for Community Solutions (CCS), a rape crisis center in San Diego. “I sit with sexual assault survivors during their forensic exams, along with nurses and police officers,” she says. “They represent the legal system. I’m there to support the victim.” Since coming to USC, she has continued to volunteer at CCS.

“Working with rape survivors increased my desire to practice within the community and to focus on those who have the least access to care,” she says.

Henderson graduated from UCSD with a BA in social psychology in 2020. Inspired by USC Rossier’s mission to advance equity, and by her own growing commitment to social justice, she chose the MFT program for graduate school. Hearing a presentation from USC Rossier’s Mary Andres at an orientation, Henderson was encouraged to develop “a wider

viewpoint of the profession. I fell in love with the emphasis on not only being well-trained but also socially aware.”

Experiences during her first years in the U.S.—encountering a polarized America, confronting loneliness, volunteering with rape survivors—inform her perspective as a therapist in training. Working as a clinical intern, she brings skills acquired during this transformative period of her life to the clients she treats.

For her fieldwork, Henderson interns with two nonprofit community health agencies in the Los Angeles area. At the Maple Counseling Center, she sees clients from ages 18 to 60 for a range of mental health disorders. “Every session is different,” she says. “I might talk to someone about anxious thoughts and then, in the next session, discuss incidents of childhood abuse.”

Henderson also draws on experiences from working at UCSD’s Human Experience and Awareness Lab, which explores mindfulness and well-being. She employs mindfulness practices in her own life and creates calm transitions between therapy sessions using an app to cue brief meditations. When appropriate, she uses mindfulness techniques such as breathing exercises with her clients.

Henderson will receive her MS degree this spring. Post-graduation, she plans on becoming a licensed marriage and family therapist, after passing the California state exams and completing the requisite hours of clinical work.

Her life has evolved since her first tumultuous months in America. “Where I once felt completely alone, I have so many people who I can lean on and who I support,” she says. “I now know that I can go anywhere and create a community.” —R

→ A master’s student in USC Rossier’s Marriage and Family Therapy program, Amy Henderson will graduate this spring.



PHOTO BY REBECCA ARANDA



In the Science Classroom, Agency Matters

Students who learn how to advocate for themselves in STEM classes see big benefits—and research hints that this could be a way to promote student retention.

By Katharine Gammon

In a classroom, motivation can go up and down. New research points to the ways that students can make the learning environment better for themselves—simply by asking their professors. USC Rossier Professor Erika Patall became interested in this idea of agentic engagement—that is, students’ proactive contributions toward what goes on in the classroom—because she had previously researched how teachers can support student autonomy.

“I was intrigued by this idea of agentic engagement because it can sometimes be hard to reach teachers,” Patall says. She knew that teachers’ motivations are affected by what’s happening in the classroom and how their students respond, and she wanted to look “for a way to shape the climate from the student’s perspective.”

Research shows, in general, that supporting students’ experience of autonomy motivates them to be engaged in the learning process and improves learning outcomes. In a new research paper, Patall—along with USC Rossier researcher Joseph Vallin MAT ’17 and PhD candidates Jeanette Zambrano,

Alana Kennedy and Nicole Yates—explored how that works. Patall studied students in college STEM courses, attempting to train them to consider their motivations as malleable and the classroom environment as changeable and responsive to their actions.

The process of agentic engagement sounds a lot more complicated than it looks in practice, Patall says. She explains that there are two elements: a belief component and a behavioral component. First, students must believe that their behaviors can change the classroom for the better. Second, students must behave agentially, asking questions, making suggestions, telling the instructor their preferences, or talking to their professor about what they need. “It’s basically thinking about what you need for this to be a better experience and acting to help the instructor make that happen,” she says.

The group studied the experiences of 706 college students in chemistry and physics classes and 359 students in psychology courses. The research included three small intervention studies in which students read articles and testimonials meant to persuade them of the benefits of asserting oneself in class, learned about strategies they could use in the classroom for being agentic, and engaged in writing exercises to help them internalize intervention ideas. When students filled out surveys at the end of the course, the studies found that the intervention was successful in changing students’ mindsets, compared with peers who didn’t complete the intervention. “If their mindset changed, that predicted students being more agentic in the class and being more engaged in other ways,” Patall says. It also indicated that students were more likely to continue studying the subject.

In the future, Patall plans to study engagement and motivation in high school students. She also wants to see if there are longitudinal benefits—if the strategy of being agentic in the classroom has lasting effects. Could it potentially change the course of a student’s academic career? Since the collegiate STEM path has a high rate of attrition, Patall would like to know how these strategies impact the long-term course of a student’s work.

And ultimately, she’d like to weave these student-centered interventions with ones that focus on teachers.

“Students can benefit from learning how to be agentic, but it breaks down and even can backfire when teachers aren’t responsive or discourage it in the first place,” says Patall. That can be especially frustrating to students who feel as if they are trying to make the classroom a better environment for everybody, she says. “How do we create an interaction that includes both training teachers and training students?”

In the end, she says her research shows how students being equipped with a sense of control over their motivation and a belief that they can impact the classroom environment is important for bringing about positive outcomes. “Anything that researchers, parents and teachers can do to support that belief is going to be beneficial to students’ engagement in their learning,” she says. —R

In the Media

“Parents and uninformed Americans are conflating conversations about structural and systemic racism with critical race theory. ... Our children absolutely deserve to know the full truth of American’s racial history—that’s not critical race theory but it is good, responsible teaching. It is what our democracy deserves.”

—**SHAUN R. HARPER**, Provost Professor of Education and Business, on the *Dr. Phil* show

“The best thing science educators can do is to explain more about how scientists know what they know and what they don’t know and how and why they don’t know it ... that would have helped citizens ... understand some of these changes in policy recommendations regarding COVID.”

—**GALE M. SINATRA**, professor of education and psychology, in *Education Week*

“This is like LeBron coming to the Lakers. Alberto Carvalho is by far the most effective and innovative urban superintendent in the country. This is huge for L.A.”

—**PEDRO A. NOGUERA**, dean of the USC Rossier School of Education in LA School Report.

“The big money that will really change stuff is in the infrastructure bill for broadband. ... If you have great content and you can’t get it out so a lot of kids can access it, then is it good content?”

—**ALAN ARKATOV**, Katzman/Ernst Chair for Educational Entrepreneurship, on Spectrum News 1

“Without systemic change, efforts to remedy racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination in the STEM fields will continue to occur at the margins. This is particularly true in STEM graduate education, where the next generation of scientists is socialized to norms, practices, and networks of knowledge production.”

—**JULIE POSSELT**, associate professor of higher education, in *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*



← The USC Leslie and William McMorrow Neighborhood Academic Initiative kicked off in September 2018 with a red carpet event.

NAI and USC Rossier team up for Math Academy

By Ellen Evaristo

THIS SUMMER, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH USC ROSSIER, students in the USC Leslie and William McMorrow Neighborhood Academic Initiative (NAI) will participate in the launch of the Summer School Math Academy for eighth graders transitioning to ninth grade. In the academy, developed by USC Rossier Professor of Clinical Education Angela Laila Hasan and Jared Dupree EdD '13, senior director of the Office of the Superintendent at Los Angeles Unified School District, students will spend five weeks on the USC campus immersed in math. The academy will extend into the school year with monthly Saturday follow-ups.

Established in 1990, the seven-year NAI program prepares students from South and East Los Angeles for admission to college. Students apply to the program in fifth grade; those accepted attend Saturday academy sessions at USC while parents attend the Family Development Institute that reinforces student academic goals and maximizes a healthy home environment.

“It is so smart to get students early on, and especially in middle school,” said Hasan, who focuses on implementing research-based parent-involvement programs across urban schools. While a student may have good grades, she said, the honing of study skills and exposure to a campus environment can add to their college readiness.

Luis Campa '02, a full-scholarship recipient in NAI’s second graduating class, earned his BA in psychology from USC. Born and raised in South Los Angeles, Campa said his on-campus experience through NAI added to his motivation to attend college. “It’s just a fence, not a barrier,” said Campa, who serves on the NAI Board of Councilors. “My biggest takeaway from NAI was access. The program is going to open their eyes.

The new academy is just one of several collaborations in the works between the NAI and USC Rossier. Others include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s first-ever U.S. Education Grand Challenge, which will include math games for middle schoolers; Students as Superheroes: Using STEM Skills to Alter History, scheduled to launch in the fall for fourth and fifth graders; and Reading Beyond Words, a program for K-3 students that begins in June. USC Rossier MAT Teacher Prep Residency students (p. 14) will also teach in schools where the NAI already operates. —**R**

USC provides more than 100 community programs serving local families and students living near our campuses, including USC Good Neighbors, Trojan Shop Local (p. 24) and USC School for Early Childhood Education (Head Start).

A Banner Year for Faculty Hires

Fourteen new faculty members
across multiple disciplines
welcomed since the fall of 2021



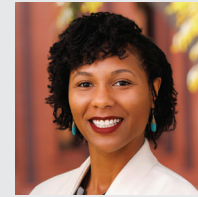
CORY M. BUCKNER,
Assistant Professor of Clinical
Education
Concentration: Higher Education
Expertise: Intercollegiate athletics,
Black male student success, college
student development, authentic
mentorship in student affairs



RUDOLPH (RUDY) CREW,
Professor of Clinical Education
Concentration: K-12 Education
Policy and Higher Education
Expertise: Urban education,
policy, leadership, organizational
alignment



BRINELL ANDERSON,
Professor of Clinical Education
Concentration: Educational
Psychology
Expertise: Psychotherapy with
African-descended persons,
psychoanalytic psychotherapy,
mindfulness meditation, spiritual
issues in psychotherapy



DWUANA BRADLEY,
Assistant Professor of Education
Concentration: Higher Education
Expertise: Critical education policy,
higher education, K-12



GREGORY A. FRANKLIN 83,
EdD '97, Professor of Clinical
Education
Concentration: K-12 Education
Policy
Expertise: Leadership, policy,
accountability



ROYEL M. JOHNSON,
Associate Professor of Education
Concentration: Higher Education
Expertise: Racial Equity, college
access and student success,
carcerality, foster care



**JESSICA THERESA DECUIR-
GUNBY,** Professor of Education
(Fall 2022)
Concentration: Educational
Psychology
Expertise: Impact of race and racism
on the educational experiences of
African Americans, critical race
theory, mixed methods research



CHRISTOPHER EMDIN,
Robert A Naslund Endowed Chair
in Curriculum and Teaching,
Professor of Education
Concentration: K-12 Education
Policy, Teacher Education
Expertise: Urban education, STEM
education, K-12 education, culture
and education, hip-hop education



CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO,
Professor of Clinical Education
Concentration: K-12 Education
Policy
Expertise: Education policy,
governance, leadership, and gender
and racial equity policies



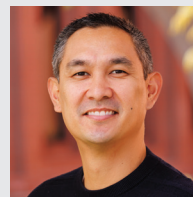
JOSEPH KITCHEN,
Assistant Research Professor,
Pullias Center for Higher Education
Expertise: STEM education,
college access



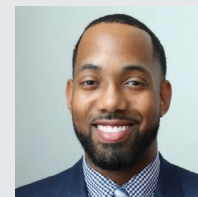
BRANDI P. JONES,
Research Professor and Chief of
Staff and Chief Operating Officer,
USC Race and Equity Center
Concentration: Higher Education
Expertise: STEM equity, student
identity and development, racial
equity, administrative leadership



ESTHER CHIHYE KIM,
Assistant (Teaching) Professor of
Education
Concentration: Higher Education
Expertise: Research methodology,
higher education, social inequities,
inclusion and representation



ATHENEUS C. OCAMPO,
Assistant Professor of
Clinical Education
Concentration: Higher Education
Expertise: Love as a praxis,
community college counseling,
critical consciousness building,
critical theory in education



DON TRAHAN, JR.,
Associate (Teaching)
Professor of Education
Concentration: Educational
Psychology
Expertise: School counseling;
culturally responsive leadership;
diversity, equity and inclusion

AWARDS & ACCOLADES



SHAFIQA AHMADI, associate professor of clinical education, and **DARNELL COLE**, associate professor of education, received major grants from the U.S. Department of Education's Innovation and Research Program to assess L.A. Promise Fund's Black College Student Initiative, and from LAUSD, in partnership with RAND, to evaluate LAUSD's Black Student Achievement Plan.

KC CULVER, senior postdoctoral research associate at the Pullias Center for Higher Education, was named associate editor of *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*.

KENDRICK B. DAVIS of the Race and Equity Center was awarded a \$420,000 contract from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to conduct an evaluation of the foundation's postsecondary work.

ÁNGEL GONZÁLEZ, postdoctoral research associate at the Pullias Center, was awarded the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) Coalition of Sexuality and Gender Identities Dr. D-L Stewart Research Recognition Award, which recognizes completed or ongoing research on LGBTQ+ issues.

SHAUN R. HARPER, Provost Professor of Education and Business, and executive director of the Race and Equity Center, was named a University Professor, one of USC's highest academic honors. Harper also received three new grants, totaling \$1.4 million, from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

ADRIAN H. HUERTA, assistant professor of education, is co-principal investigator with Long Beach City College on a \$990,000 U.S. Department of Education grant focused on college pathways for gang-involved youth (p. 5). Huerta was also awarded the American College Personnel Association Coalition for Men and Masculinities Outstanding Research Award for 2022 and the inaugural National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Formerly Incarcerated & System Impacted Families Knowledge Community Outstanding Scholar Award.

MARY HELEN IMMORDINO-YANG, professor of education, psychology and neuroscience, is an advisory board member on a major project funded by the Institute of Education Science. She also received an additional \$95,000 for a project on adolescent development, from the Templeton Foundation with the Intellectual Virtues Academy Charter School, Long Beach, Calif.

KIM HIRABAYASHI, professor of clinical education, was accepted into the American Psychological Association Leadership Institute for Women in Psychology Signature Program.

ROYEL M. JOHNSON, associate professor of higher education, was awarded the 2022 Dr. Carlos J. Vallejo Memorial Award for Emerging Scholarship from the American Educational Research Association. Johnson also won the 2022 Outstanding Contribution to Multicultural Education and Research Award through the Coalition for Multicultural Affairs from the American College Personnel Association.

DEBORAH KARPMAN, assistant dean for research, was selected for the American Council on Education Fellows Program.

ADAM KHO, assistant professor of education, was appointed Chair of the AERA School Turnaround and Reform Special Interest Group.

JOSEPH A. KITCHEN, assistant research professor, was appointed to the editorial board of the *Journal of College Student Development*, a leading academic journal in higher education.

STEPHEN KRASHEN, emeritus professor of education, was recognized with the Ramon Santiago Award by the National Association for Bilingual Education.

EDGAR FIDEL LOPEZ, PhD candidate, was accepted as an external graduate student affiliate for the Center for Latinx Digital Media at Northwestern University and was a Top 5 Finalist for the 2021–2022 Paul P. Fidler Research Grant.

JULIE MARSH, professor of education policy, received the Outstanding Publication Award, AERA Districts in Research and Reform Special Interest Group, for a book she co-authored, *“Challenging the One Best System: The Portfolio Management Model and Urban School Governance.”*

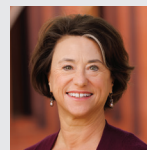
PEDRO A. NOGUERA, USC Rossier dean, has been named the winner of the 2022 PROSE Award in Education Practice & Theory by the Association of American Publishers for his book *A Search for Common Ground*, co-authored with Frederick M. Hess.



MARIA G. OTT, professor of clinical education, was granted a lifetime achievement award from the Association of Latino School Administrators.

JULIE POSSELT, associate professor of education, was awarded \$50,000 by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation for a planning grant to scale up the California Consortium for Inclusive Doctoral Education.

AIREALE J. RODGERS, research assistant at the Pullias Center, received the K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders Award from the Association of American Colleges & Universities.



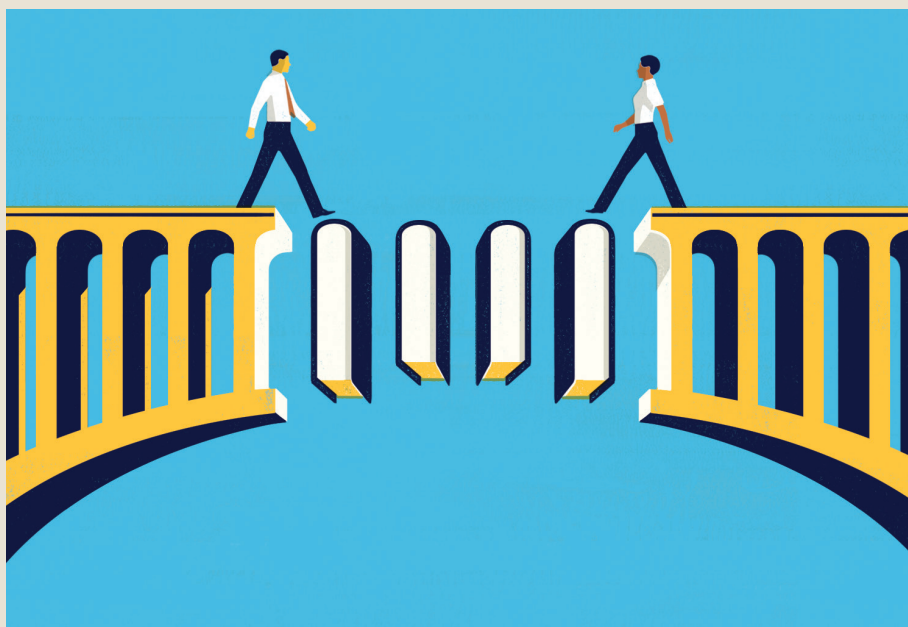
GALE M. SINATRA, Stephen H. Crocker Chair and Professor of Education and Psychology, was elected to the National Academy of Education, which advances high-quality research that improves policy and practice in education.

JOHN SLAUGHTER, University Professor, is the recipient of the 2022 Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Founders Medal and was inducted into the Kansas African American Museum's Trailblazer Hall of Fame.

BRENDESHA TYNES, Dean's Professor of Educational Equity, was named a 2022 AERA fellow.

ELIF YUCEL, research assistant, received the NACA Foundation Advancing Research in Campus Activities Grant, Bronze Award.

PEDRO A. NOGUERA, USC Rossier dean (3), **SHAUN R. HARPER**, Provost Professor (10), **CHRISTOPHER EMDIN** (30), **WILLIAM G. TIERNEY**, University Professor Emeritus (36), **ESTELA MARA BENSIMON**, University Professor Emeritus (46), **MORGAN POLIKOFF**, associate professor of education (127) and **JULIE MARSH**, professor of education (145) were featured in *Education Week's* 2022 “Rick Hess Straight Up” Edu-Scholar Public Influence Rankings, which ranks the top 200 university-based scholars in the U.S. who did the most last year to shape educational practice and policy.



Bridging the gap between research and practice

By Courtney Malloy EdD '03,
Professor of Clinical Education

As a professor at USC Rossier and an applied researcher and evaluator, it is common for me to talk with educational practitioners about using existing research and evidence to drive decision-making. At the same time, practitioners often tell me that some academic research feels inaccessible and inapplicable to the immediate needs of their local contexts.

The goal of research, generally, is to produce new knowledge with an aim to discover new theories and revise existing ones. Bridging the research-to-practice gap requires finding ways to craft research and evaluation projects that are translational in nature. Translational research seeks to uncover ways that research can directly benefit society, and there are several things that educational researchers can do to translate their findings more effectively and efficiently into practice.

Partner with local schools

Researchers can partner with practitioners in local schools, colleges and other educational settings to identify immediate, pressing needs

and design studies that help educators to evaluate existing initiatives and directly address problems of practice. A problem of practice is a persistent issue or challenge in a local context or workplace. Generating research topics based on input from the field helps not only to make the research more relevant and useful but also to build buy-in for the work itself. It can also be helpful to include educators on research teams or advisory boards to assist with the project from design to dissemination. Key partners can inform a) the selection of data sources, b) the development of instruments such as surveys, tests, interview guides and rubrics, c) the data-collection processes, d) the interpretation of data, and e) generation of actionable findings.

Make research findings accessible

To increase the utilization of findings by practitioners specifically, educational researchers can work to disseminate findings in avenues most accessible to practitioners. Many educators do not have access to academic databases and journals, and these publications are rarely targeted to a practitioner audience. Likewise, academic research conferences are not spaces intended to inform practitioners. In order to maximize the translation of research to practice, researchers can work to generate publications and products with practitioners in mind. Disseminating findings through practitioner-oriented journals and conferences can be helpful; digestible research and evaluation

reports and briefs may also be worthwhile. Symposia and panel discussions—both virtual and in person—can bring researchers and practitioners together to discuss findings and potential innovations. Moreover, community-based joint presentations offer an opportunity to share research results and implications for practice in local contexts. Researchers can also work alongside teams of educators in planning sessions designed to review data and evidence and determine next steps.

Work with practitioners to generate evidence-based solutions

Educational practitioners and researchers can also work together to craft and evaluate interventions and reforms that are aligned with evidence-based practice. Researchers have valuable knowledge regarding how to test the efficacy of existing strategies or examine how a successful practice works. Practitioners are experts in their respective fields and understand the unique needs and assets in their local contexts. Together, a team of academics and practitioners can work inventively on research and development efforts. Such collaborative endeavors leverage the strengths of both parties and have the potential to solve intractable problems in our schools and communities.

These kinds of strategies increase not only the likelihood that research and evaluation findings will be used but also the capacity for evidence-based decision-making and evaluative thinking in educational settings. —R

Turning Around the Teacher Crisis



As teacher shortages trouble the nation, USC Rossier's new teaching residency program aims to prepare educators for the challenges of L.A. classrooms and create a more diverse workforce

Story: Ellen Evaristo
Illustration: Edmon de Haro

AS WE ENTER YEAR THREE OF THE COVID-19 pandemic, schools across the nation are struggling to fill teacher vacancies. Even before the 2021–2022 school year, teacher shortages have become a subject addressed in countless news stories. A study conducted between August and September 2021 noted that two-thirds of California districts reported a spike in teacher vacancies and found it challenging to fill those open positions.

“The pandemic has taken a toll on many teachers with respect to their mental health,” said Pedro A. Noguera, dean of the USC Rossier School of Education. “Many are experiencing burnout and exhaustion, and several studies have suggested that many teachers may retire at the end of the school year.”

While the dip in teachers is widely felt across the state and country, the shortage is keenly felt in the communities around USC, as schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) reported a fivefold increase in teacher vacancies in fall 2021.

“Teaching is always a very taxing job, and in Los Angeles, many teachers may have to travel long distances to get to work, and younger teachers often have trouble finding affordable housing near their schools,” Noguera said. “It’s not surprising that it’s becoming more difficult to recruit and retain teachers in many parts of the country, including L.A.”

How then can graduate schools of education address the teacher shortage?

Research suggests the answer might be found in teacher residency programs. While USC Rossier offered its first teacher residency program in 2019 (p. 31), the school launched a new program in 2021, in partnership with LAUSD, with the aim of confronting the teacher shortage in Los Angeles’ schools head on.

The USC Rossier Teacher Preparation Residency provides graduate students in the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program with full scholarships as well as a living stipend of \$20,000 while they train in LAUSD schools. After graduation, residents commit to teaching in LAUSD schools for four years.

WHERE DID ALL THE TEACHERS GO?

Before the pandemic, a number of factors contributed to the teacher shortage—low pay, lack of support, poor working conditions and early retirement to name a few. A June 2021 survey conducted by the National Education Association (NEA) found that one-third of members reported plans to leave education sooner than expected.

“We face a looming crisis in losing educators at a time when our students need them most,” NEA President Becky Pringle said in the report. “Even our earliest career educators report they may leave the education field, at alarming rates. This is a serious problem with potential effects for generations.”

University of Pennsylvania Professor Richard Ingersoll, who studies teacher turnover and retention, put it best, calling the trend a “revolving door of teachers” in an interview with NPR in 2015. He noted that half of all newly minted educators will transfer schools or leave teaching after their first five years.

Another reason for the shortage: lack of preparation. A recent report by the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) found that in California “teaching positions have increasingly been filled with underprepared teachers who have not completed the requirements for full credentials.”

Investing in teacher professional development and preparation can help mitigate teacher shortages, the LPI report found. Educators who are fully prepared and well-mentored are more likely to remain in the classroom, reducing annual teacher demand. In California, recommendations have been made to implement a statewide recruitment initiative to support candidates as they navigate through the complex process of becoming a teacher with a goal of ending the teacher shortage.

“Teachers are put in the position where they have to pivot and wear several hats,” said Tracy Murray, principal of James A. Foshay Learning Center, a K–12 LAUSD school and one of USC’s largest feeder schools. Last year, USC accepted 45 Foshay graduates; 41 ended up enrolling.

The educator's role has shifted considerably and continues to change, especially throughout the pandemic. Teachers are not only charged with executing lesson plans, but they also often serve as counselors, psychologists and social workers as they aim to meet the needs of the whole child. For some K–12 students, school is more than a place to learn. "School is a safe haven for kids; they may not have that traditional type of support structure during the school day when their parents are away at work," Murray said. "Teachers have had to do a lot with social-emotional learning as well."

Jumpstart USC Offers Extra Hands

Established in 2009, Jumpstart USC's mission is to support and ensure that all preschool students are prepared to succeed when they enter kindergarten. Each year, 40 USC undergraduate and graduate students, or "members," are hired to provide individual tutoring and mentoring to children who attend a partner preschool within the surrounding USC community.

During the pandemic, the program was able to quickly modify and nimbly adjust to go virtual thanks to those strong community partnerships. Classes were taught virtually the first year of the pandemic. Currently, classes are a mix of in-person, virtual and recorded sessions. End-of-year parent feedback was overwhelmingly positive, many parents stated that their children gained important social skills because of the Jumpstart program.

"For some little ones, who started preschool last fall, this was their first time stepping into a classroom; some may have had social behavioral challenges," said Maricela Mbila, USC Rossier Jumpstart Site Manager. "Teachers were very happy to have our members there, because they have an extra set of hands in the classroom."

Some Jumpstart members are non-education majors. Mbila added that six of her members last year decided to add a minor in education to their USC studies. "It's definitely a highlight for us when more members express interest in a minor or want to pursue a post-graduate degree in education," Mbila added.

"Providing mentorship and support during the first few years of teaching is essential for increasing the likelihood that they will remain in the profession."

—Pedro A. Noguera, dean of the USC Rossier School of Education

"There's a cartoon of a teacher shaped like an octopus," said recent graduate Thomas Woods MAT '21. "Finally, as an educator, I get it." A third-grade teacher at Sherman Oaks Elementary Charter School, Woods believes that being an educator ultimately comes down to knowing your students.

Knowing students and knowing what challenges they are facing—at school and at home—is crucial in determining what type of services and resources they need to succeed, and with LAUSD class sizes averaging 24 to 38, depending on grade level, this task is especially difficult.

While teachers are asked to fill multiple roles in the classroom, the numbers—that is, teachers' compensation rates—don't add up. Reporting on the impact of student debt on educators, the NEA found that 45 percent of teachers have taken out a student loan to fund their own education and that 14 percent of educators with unpaid student debt have a current balance of \$105,000 or higher. As of May 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that educators' median yearly pay was \$60,660.

WHY A RESIDENCY PROGRAM?

Studies have found that the residency approach is more effective when students have opportunities to practice what they have learned. "I have repeatedly called for residency programs for teachers, like those you see in the medical profession, to ensure our educators have the training and knowledge to succeed in their classrooms and in their careers," said Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers.

Teachers who complete a residency program are more likely to remain in the teaching profession with high retention rates, "ranging from 80–90 percent in the same district after three years and 70–80 percent after five years," according to the LPI report.

In 2019, Margo Pensavalle, USC Rossier professor of clinical education, and Karen Symms Gallagher, then-dean of USC Rossier, established the first teacher residency through the Prepared to Teach program, graduating six



“We wanted *all* candidates to have access to a preparation for teaching *all* children.”

—Margo Pensavalle, USC Rossier professor of clinical education

MAT students (p. 32). However, funds for the program were reallocated during the pandemic. When Noguera arrived at USC Rossier in the summer of 2020, Pensavalle shared the achievements of the first residency, and soon plans were underway to secure funding for a new program and develop

a partnership with LAUSD. The program, spearheaded by Pensavalle, also seeks to expand its demographic range of candidates.

The residency program consists of three, consecutive 15-week terms, and includes teaching in the same classroom for all three terms. Residents are partnered with mentors who are fully credentialed and experienced teachers. “Providing mentorship and support during the first few years of teaching is essential for increasing the likelihood that they will remain in the profession,” Noguera said. “This is why we want to have a relationship with the schools where we train and place our teachers that goes well beyond graduation.”

With the mission of building community connection, the residency format’s goal is to attract quality candidates who have a long-term commitment to the students and communities where they teach. What makes the program unique is the LAUSD connection. Graduates are guaranteed placement at an LAUSD school with, at minimum, a four-year commitment.

Also unique is that the program simultaneously prepares teachers for general education, special education and bilingual authorization, with no additional units or cost. All new educators will have students with special needs; teachers will be prepared to address the needs of all students. “We want our graduates to teach in areas surrounding USC in LAUSD or other underserved schools,” Pensavalle said. “Many of these schools have higher numbers of students with special needs and English language learners. We wanted *all* candidates to have access to a preparation for teaching *all* children and have the option to earn the supporting credentials without incurring extra cost and taking longer.”

EQUITABLE EDUCATION

This academic year, LAUSD serves more than 574,000 students from transitional kindergarteners to adult learners. Seventy-three percent of students in the district are Latino, 10.5 percent are White, 7.5 percent are Black and 3.9 percent are Asian. As the second-largest employer in Los Angeles County, the district has more than 25,000 teachers. Forty-four percent of educators are Latino, 31.6 percent are White, 8.9 percent are Black and 9.2 percent are Asian.

In comparison to the rest of the country, LAUSD is doing much better when it comes assembling a body of educators who look like the students they serve. However, throughout the nation, disparities are all too common. On average, teachers of color comprise 19.9 percent of the teacher workforce. Meanwhile, students of color comprise more than 50 percent of total enrollment nationwide, according to Ingersoll’s 2018 report.

A diverse educator workforce benefits all students, particularly students of color, according to the California Department of Education. Students who have teachers of color have greater academic performance and more positive

MfA LA Pivots to Pandemic Challenges

Math for America Los Angeles (MfA LA) started in 2008 through a partnership with the USC Rossier School of Education, Harvey Mudd College and Claremont Graduate University. For the past 14 years, MfA LA has supported the professional development, growth and retention of secondary school mathematics and computer science teachers in Los Angeles.

The program consists of three focuses: Master Teacher Fellowship in Math, Master Teacher Fellowship in Computer Science and Early Career Teacher Fellowship in Mathematics and/or Computer Science. Teachers selected into the program receive a \$10,000 annual stipend, funding to attend conferences and professional development.

The organization's programs have evolved and strengthened over time to meet the needs of MfA LA's teaching fellows and their students. Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, Pam Mason, executive director of MfA LA said she's been "struck by the commitment of our MfA LA fellows to continue to provide a first-rate education to their students in the face of a completely different teaching environment." Mason, who is also a 35-year veteran teacher for the Los Angeles Unified School District, said "our fellows pivoted to distance learning, and continue[d] providing professional development online. Collaborating and exchanging ideas with other educators was vitally important."

MfA LA ensured that fellows had the equipment to teach remotely and the emotional support to sustain them during this challenging period. Aurora Barboza Flores, a fellow in the program and math teacher at Glendale High School, said, "MfA LA is a group that cares, provides support and makes sure that everyone finds a better version of themselves in and out of the classroom."

perceptions of their teachers. They also report that they feel cared for and academically challenged.

However, despite these benefits, teachers of color are leaving the profession at alarming rates. A recent *Los Angeles Times* article revealed that Black and Latino teachers are

exiting just when the data shows that "teachers of color improve educational outcomes for students of the same background." To address this urgent need, incoming LAUSD Superintendent Alberto Carvalho has been tasked with developing a strategic plan to recruit, develop and retain Black educators.

The USC residency program plans to recruit and support talented educators who reflect the diversity of the Los Angeles Unified School District and embody the USC Rossier mission. The MAT program, at its core, has a mission to prepare all future educators for a diverse classroom. "And by diversity, we mean all kinds of diversity—language diversity, ethnic diversity, racial diversity, cultural diversity, intellectual diversity," said Professor of Clinical Education Eugenia Mora-Flores, chair of the MAT program.

Erika Meija MAT '19, a third-grade teacher at Western Avenue T.E.C.H. Magnet School in South Los Angeles, found the USC Rossier MAT program appealing because it catered to first-generation students and people of color,

In December, the university doubled down on its commitment to future teachers, with an additional \$1.5 million allocated to scholarships.

especially Latino students. "I knew that I would be working in an urban community, in my own community," Meija said. "Those of us who really want to be out there are doing it for the joy of doing better for our communities."

In December, the university doubled down on its commitment to future teachers, with an additional \$1.5 million allocated to scholarships for 20 MAT students.

In remarks at a meeting with LAUSD leaders, during which the scholarship funds were announced, USC President Carol L. Folt said, "Our partnership with LAUSD is critical, because it will mean USC is helping to increase opportunities for students in our communities, improve public education in Los Angeles and ensure that all children have access to excellent teachers and a high-quality education."

Through the new residency program, around two-thirds of USC Rossier MAT students will be scholarship recipients. The first six students of the residency's inaugural class will graduate this spring, and they will begin teaching full time in LAUSD classrooms in the fall. —R

Building the Foundation for Economic Opportunity

Michèle G. Turner BS '81, EdD '14
is blazing a path forward for
diverse contracting at USC

Story: Adriana Maestas
Photos: Damon Casarez

↗
Michèle G. Turner BS '81, EdD '14 was appointed associate vice president of USC's new Office of Business Diversity and Economic Opportunity in January 2021. The office seeks to improve the university's connection to local small businesses owned by minorities, women and veterans.



Michèle G. Turner BS '81, EdD '14 and Gary D. Brown BS '96 speak with Kim Prince at her restaurant, Hotville Chicken, located at the Baldwin Hills Crenshaw mall. Hotville Chicken is a USC vendor and member of the Trojan Shop Local directory.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA is one of the state's strongest economic engines, spurring \$8 billion annually in economic activity in the Los Angeles region and elsewhere in California. As the second-largest private-sector employer in the county, USC employs nearly 22,000. The university's impact is large and wide-reaching.

"When we think of a college, we think of educating young adults, but [USC does] a lot of other work that touches businesses," said Lawrence O. Picus, the Richard T. Cooper and Mary Catherine Cooper Chair in Public School Administration at the USC Rossier School of Education.

"We feed people; we hire people to do all kinds of things from building maintenance and construction to providing supplies. We have support staff that go as high as vice presidents, and we have finance and IT professionals. We have really good jobs here at USC, and there's also a lot of contracted purchases," Picus said.

In January 2021, in an effort to better connect USC with local small businesses owned by minorities, women and veterans, the university announced the establishment of the Office of Business Diversity and Economic Opportunity. When looking for someone to lead the effort, the university didn't have to look far. Heading the new venture is two-time Trojan Michèle G. Turner BS '81, EdD '14. Known as Sheli to close colleagues and friends, she served as executive director of USC's Black Alumni Association for nearly 13 years.

Picus, who served on Turner's dissertation committee while she was completing her EdD in USC Rossier's Global Executive program, believes that Turner is particularly well-positioned to help generate economic opportunity for business owners of color in the surrounding communities. "The network that Sheli was part of in this program, in addition to the network that she was part of and helped grow with

the Black Alumni Association, will serve her well. She's very thoughtful, well-connected and skilled," Picus said.

In addition to her many years of experience at USC, Turner understands what it's like to build a successful enterprise in Los Angeles while confronting the systemic barriers that minority-owned small business owners often encounter. Turner and her husband built a consulting radiology-services business that has operated for about 27 years in the health care space. Originally, they created a network of seven outpatient imaging centers; they sold those, and now their business carries contracts throughout Southern California.

"Both my husband and I had great educational foundations, and I had a very strong foundation of being successful in the corporate world," Turner said. "I knew what our strengths were. We knew that what we could offer was as good if not better than what our competition was offering, and we held on to our strengths and beliefs as tightly as we could. That is what diverse businesses have to do to rise and persist. I am also extremely proud of the opportunities we have provided to other physicians, technicians and administrators of color over these years, proving again and again that excellence can be provided through access."

Turner's entrepreneurial spirit, in addition to her early career achievements climbing the corporate ladder in one of the biggest technology companies in the world, gives her the business acumen to lead the new effort. Turner, who has been the associate vice president of the office for a little over a year, is excited about the challenge that she's been tasked with to make USC a model for economic inclusion in Southern California.

"I look at this job from the perspective of being a small business owner," Turner said. "As such, I know that only being on a diverse supplier list isn't good enough if the contracting business or organization doesn't use me, or if they don't pay me on time. A small business is thinking about maintaining, sustaining and growing their business.

"They need good partners and to feel confident that whom they are doing business with will want to seek them out repeatedly and honor their contracts and agreements in a manner that benefits their business cycles," she added.

STRENGTHENING NETWORKS AND FORGING NEW ONES

Building relationships with the broader community is something in which Turner is highly skilled, especially when it comes to diverse alumni and communities of color. As executive director of the USC Black Alumni Association, she increased scholarship development up to the \$10 million level. In addition, Turner led career mentoring and cultural advocacy efforts through alumni networking, philanthropy and social enterprise.

Many of Turner's classmates and fellow Black Trojan alumni are business owners and leaders. Turner was able to build upon the experiences of Black alumni who knew

“This office is strengthening the footprint of USC in the community by reaching out to small, diverse businesses with support, so we can build up this community together.”

—Gary D. Brown BS '96, program specialist, Office of Business Diversity and Economic Opportunity

what it takes to be successful on campus to develop the competencies and resources for current Black students to be successful in their studies.

“Working with Black alumni was a great opportunity,” Turner said. “My current [role] is an extension of that work. [Now], I get to focus on excellence and success from the lens of a businessperson of color, who I really am—who I became after I graduated. ... It’s coming full circle in my professional work.”

When Turner began the task of staffing her office, she immediately thought of Gary D. Brown BS '96. The two had worked together at the Black Alumni Association, where he served as assistant director. Brown is now a program specialist in the new office. He not only has intimate knowledge of USC and the experience of being a student and staff member at the university, but he also grew up in South Los Angeles.

“This office is in a great position to establish USC even further in the community,” he said. “Coming from South Central, I know that USC has sometimes had this reputation, whether deserved or not, of being its own isolated environment. For a long time, for a lot of local youth, being here wasn’t attainable as a college student, and for many businesses, engaging as a vendor wasn’t a possibility. So, this office is strengthening the footprint of USC in the community by reaching out to small, diverse businesses with support, so we can build up this community together.”

One of the first initiatives the office has been amplifying is Trojan Shop Local. Originally started by students in the USC Black Student Assembly, the online directory brings together dozens of listings for local businesses around USC’s campuses. Turner sees the purpose of the directory as two-fold: It provides exposure to community businesses, and it exposes USC staff, faculty and students to the communities outside the campus gates.

Many of the businesses in the directory were already familiar to Turner and Brown, who often turned to local restaurants to cater events for the Black Alumni Association. One such business, Southern Girl Desserts (p. 22), was brought on by Turner in 2008. The bakery, run by Catarah Coleman and Shoneji Robison, has two locations, one at the Baldwin Hills Crenshaw mall and a new location at Freedom Plaza. Another of Turner’s favorites is the famed Hotville Chicken. Frequently listed among Los Angeles’ best restaurants, the business is owned by Kim Prince.

Local favorite Hotville Chicken strengthens ties to USC

When you first walk into Hotville Chicken, located at the Baldwin Hills Crenshaw mall, you might think that owner Kim Prince is a USC grad. The restaurant is decorated in cardinal and gold, and there’s signed memorabilia from USC athletic teams in the glass cabinets that decorate the space.

Prince was involved in college athletics, but she cheered for Fresno State, where she studied public administration. Originally from Nashville, Tenn., she is a descendent of Thornton Prince, owner of Prince’s Hot Chicken Shack, which opened in Nashville in 1945. The business is lauded as the first restaurant to popularize hot chicken. Prince also has roots in Los Angeles, as her family moved to the area in the '80s. So, when she opened Hotville Chicken in 2016, the business was both an ode to her family history and an investment in the community where she grew up.

“USC students [have frequented] Hotville since 2016 when I was a pop-up,” Prince said. The patronage has continued, with students making the short trip from campus over to her brick-and-mortar storefront, and with Prince coming to USC with her food truck for special events. Recently, Hotville catered the “Family Reunion,” an event in celebration of Black History Month. Hotville sold all 700 meals prepared for the event.



FEATURE

Southern Girl Desserts shares family recipes with L.A.

Michèle G. Turner initially selected Southern Girl Desserts to cater events for the USC Black Alumni Association in 2008, shortly after the business opened, because the desserts on the menu were familiar to the Black community. “We look at the menu and we know it. All of it tastes like home,” Turner said.

Owners Catarah Coleman and Shoneji Robison opened the shop in 2007 as a means to bring “Southern hospitality and flair” to Los Angeles. Their unique menus draw on the duo’s family recipes. Coleman recommends those new to Southern desserts to start with a classic: yellow cake with chocolate frosting. For the more adventurous, there’s a sweet potato pecan pie or the Hennessy and Coke cake. And you can never go wrong with a red velvet cupcake. The bakery is also one of the few in the area to create Mardi Gras king cakes, complete with a traditional toy baby hidden inside. Whoever is so lucky to find the baby, which represents Jesus, is said to be destined for prosperity.

The bakery has become widely popular, and Coleman and Robison won the Food Network’s *Cupcake Wars* in 2013. As the Black Lives Matter movement gained prominence in the summer of 2020, Southern Girl Desserts experienced a surge in demand as customers looked to support Black-owned businesses. Its sales doubled, and shipping orders rose more than 75 percent.



While Turner helped identify and bring businesses like Southern Girl Desserts and Hotville Chicken into the USC fold. Other schools and departments are now turning to the eateries for their own catering needs, and there are plans in the works for Hotville to operate a food truck at the university’s weekly farmers market.

Brown said the office plans to build relationships with businesses that focus on personal services and health and wellness. And, in partnership with the USC Credit Union, the office aims to make connections with providers of financial services.

CULTIVATING STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS WITH DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

USC has not always been viewed as a partner or place of opportunity for business owners of color and for people from marginalized communities. The brick-and-iron fence that surrounds the campus is viewed by some as a reminder of how the campus has at times been disconnected from the local community and as a reminder of how USC could be viewed as a driver of gentrification in South L.A.

As USC has continued to grow, there have been rising rents and a widening disparity between the more affluent student body, where White students and faculty are the largest racial groups on campus, and the communities around USC. In South L.A., for example, where USC’s University Park campus is situated, the majority population is Latino, followed by Black and Asian residents. USC is in a “majority-minority” neighborhood. The racial-ethnic disparities and wealth gap in South L.A. are stark, with about a quarter of the population living at or below the poverty line.

While underserved communities like South L.A. are often unfairly defined by this economic struggle, the contributions from the neighborhoods of South L.A. and others are deeply woven into the cultural fabric of the city. Jefferson High School fostered the talents of jazz legends like Etta James, and activists from South L.A. played central roles in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. The area was home to the Black Arts Movement of the ‘60s and ‘70s, and South L.A. continues to be a hotbed for arts, culture and politics, with the likes of painter Kehinde Wiley, late Olympic gold medalist Florence Griffith Joyner and a long list of musicians, from Dr. Dre to the late Nipsey Hussle, all hailing from the area. The Office of Business Diversity and Economic Opportunity has an opportunity not only to lift up communities near USC but also to introduce its student body, staff and faculty to their rich history and culture.

Mark Power Robison (no relation to Shoneji Robison), professor of clinical education and history as well as chair of the Global Executive Doctor of Education program, was Turner’s dissertation chair. He believes that Turner has the skills and capacity to help the campus cultivate a different relationship with the diverse communities in which the campus is situated.

FEATURE

“There have been long-standing, valid concerns in the Jewish community, the African American community, and other communities about the university and how it has operated,” Robison said. “However, USC has worked hard over many decades to rectify this and build different relationships. Sheli Turner is a vital part of that as an alumna, businessperson, employee and as a scholar in her work in her dissertation [titled “Institutional Diversity Policy Improvement Through the Lens of Black Alumni Stakeholder Leadership”]. She’s part of that story to help USC forge a different relationship with the African American community and diverse communities around us.”

Robison sees Turner as a problem solver and a transformational leader. “Sheli sees a circumstance and looks for ways to make it better,” he said. “She is very good at this—on top of her personal experiences and understanding of what it is like to be a minority woman business owner. She knows how to get stuff done at USC, and she has an academic acumen in affecting positive change. She’s a passionate Trojan, and she has the skills to bring diverse business, small business owners to the table.”

USC’s vision for creating a more equitable community that brings diverse, small business owners into its ecosystem requires someone who knows what the Trojan network has to offer and someone who can create sustainable partnerships both on and off campus. In leading the USC Black Alumni Association, Turner was already building bridges in the Black alumni network to help strengthen the Trojan community.

Beyond the strong formal skills, decades of experience in corporate America and as a business owner of color, and relationships that Turner brings to the position, her colleagues see an empathetic leader who values integrity.

“Sheli has built a fantastic reputation and a level of trust with the community that she can leverage to advance the mission of the work that we’re doing to create more economic inclusion,” said Effie Turnbull Sanders, USC’s vice president of civic engagement and economic partnerships, which oversees the work of the Office of Business Diversity and Economic Opportunity. “In business, barriers show up in cultural and implicit bias, and even racism. Sheli can use her skills to show how bringing equity and inclusion programs is a win-win for the community and for USC. Engaging diverse businesses makes us a stronger institution by leaning into our values. Sheli’s personal commitment to these values around honesty, integrity and bringing trust and collaboration helps strengthen us as an institution.

“Sheli brings joy and optimism to the workplace and to the folks that she works with,” Turnbull Sanders added. This work can sometimes be a heavy lift and emotionally taxing, and she brings joy and levity to the work that inspires her colleagues to look for the bright side and for the silver lining in things. Sheli also celebrates victories, which is a testament to her leadership.”

USC’s Civic Engagement division is implementing these economic inclusion programs by bringing people, businesses



“I want the spirit and intent of this program to last beyond me and become ingrained in USC’s DNA.”

—Michèle G. Turner BS ’81, EdD ’14, associate vice president, Office of Business Diversity and Economic Opportunity

and organizations together. The university doesn’t want to shame or blame people for not making as much progress as some would like to see. Turner and her team are focused on bringing business owners together with the university in a way that allows their common interests to advance. USC aims to build partnerships that drive economic and workforce development in the Los Angeles metropolitan area and in the state.

For now, Turner is taking a systemic approach to connect small, diverse businesses and the communities in which they operate to the major economic powerhouse that USC has become for the Southern California region and for the state. This includes raising awareness about what services the university needs, and seeking out and matching those needs with diverse service providers, making people on campus aware of the local talent. The systemic approach also involves building the relationships for the long-term engagement required to develop a sustainable pipeline of diverse businesses for USC to contract with.

“I’m very proud of the progress made so far to look internally at our own infrastructure up to this point to build an improved diverse economic inclusion initiative. I want the spirit and intent of this program to last beyond me and become ingrained in USC’s DNA,” Turner said. “We have announced supplier contracting policy in the past, but now it is important to look at things systemically—really get into the nuts and bolts of driving improvement and change throughout an entire ecosystem of our institution and our community.” —R

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Catarah Coleman, co-owner of Southern Girl Desserts, shows Brown and Turner one of her Mardi Gras king cakes.

Sylinda (left) and Aja (right) participate in a yoga class during after-school programming at the Crenshaw Family YMCA.



With Veda Ramsay-Stamps MPA '18 at the Helm, the Crenshaw Family YMCA Has Become an Essential Hub for the Community

After a career in public policy took this Global EdD student from Washington, D.C., to Fresno, Calif., Ramsay-Stamps found her way back to the heart of L.A.

Story: Kianoosh Hashemzadeh
Photos: Rebecca Aranda

EVERYONE HOLDS THEIR BREATH AS AUTUMN PLACES ANOTHER weight on the Lego bridge she built with partner Paula. As the two girls, 3rd and 4th graders at Crete Academy school in the South Los Angeles neighborhood of Crenshaw, continue to add weights to their sturdy bridge, one of their competitors steps away to go “fortify my bridge.”

The kids are part of the after-school program at the Crenshaw Family YMCA. They come Monday through Friday and get out their post-class energy in the gym before settling down for homework time, tutoring and a variety of STEM activities. This day marked the end of the group’s bridge-making challenge as they put their creations to work, testing how much weight each of their structures could hold. The task was created by after-school coordinator William Chavez (p. 26), who gave the kids, working in teams, height, width and clearance specifications for their bridges.

“They are like a family,” Veda Ramsay-Stamps MPA '18, a doctoral candidate in USC Rossier’s Global EdD program and executive director of the Crenshaw Family Y, says of the kids who attend the after-school program. They come together daily not only to receive extra academic support but also to connect with one another and their community through a variety of activities, from chess and robotics to basketball and yoga.

Ramsay-Stamps, who has a background in policy work, took the position at the Crenshaw Family Y in 2019, shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic turned life upside down.

FINDING HER WAY BACK TO THE HEART OF THE CITY

Ramsay-Stamps was born in L.A. but grew up in New Orleans. Pontchartrain Park, a suburban-style neighborhood developed specifically for Black families after World War II during the Jim Crow era of racial segregation, was home. Famous musicians as well as prominent Black politicians emerged from the neighborhood. Although the house she grew up in no longer exists—the area was hit hard by Hurricane Katrina—when Ramsay-Stamps thinks of home and community, she thinks of Pontchartrain Park.

As Ramsay-Stamps was growing up, her family struggled financially. “My mother and I were extremely poor. My mother suffered from mental health challenges, so she leaned heavily on my grandparents to help raise me. She had eight brothers and sisters, who were also actively engaged in the process of helping me thrive. Even though she and I had some difficult moments, my memories in New Orleans are filled with a lot of love.”

While she spent the majority of her childhood in New Orleans, her schooling was interrupted, as she and her mother relocated to Los Angeles for short stints. Life in L.A. was challenging for Ramsay-Stamps and her mother, as they did not have the same support system they had in New Orleans.

Despite the obstacles, Ramsay-Stamps looks back on her early life in New Orleans fondly. “New Orleans definitely shaped me more in my formative years. It was a beautiful environment, filled with community love and discipline. If you did something wrong you could expect a neighbor to swiftly correct your behavior,” Ramsay-Stamps says. And it’s this type of community—where

child rearing is a collective effort—that Ramsay-Stamps is trying to emulate at the Crenshaw Family Y.

When Ramsay-Stamps was a high school senior and considering next steps, her guidance counselor, who was White, said college wasn't an option, given her grades. "I had horrible grades," Ramsay-Stamps says. "I was very inquisitive as a child [and] always read ... but no one in my household would say, 'hey, get your homework done.'"

Her guidance counselor suggested she pursue secretarial work, but when a representative from California State University, Fresno, came to a college fair at her school, Ramsay-Stamps' trajectory changed course. "It was as if a light bulb went off," she says. He encouraged Ramsay-Stamps to apply to the college's Educational Opportunity Program, an initiative designed to help low-income, historically underserved students access higher education. The program also offered a summer bridge program that would help Ramsay-Stamps prepare for the challenges of college.

One Step at a Time

Stay Connected L.A. was a project started by USC during the onset of the pandemic to reduce transmission of COVID-19 in Latino communities of eastern Los Angeles. The program funded a series of community-based art projects to help spread messaging about vaccination and encourage general health and well-being.

One such project was a community cleanup and beautification project of the Heidleman Stairs led by William Chavez, current after-school coordinator at the Crenshaw Family YMCA. The Heidleman Stairs are a "key walking corridor that connect neighborhoods in El Sereno," Kayla de la Haya, a USC assistant professor of preventive medicine and member of the Stay Connected L.A. project team, said in a presentation about the project. After years of neglect, the stairs had become a place residents avoided, but Chavez, who worked at the Weingart East Los Angeles YMCA while overseeing the initiative, sought to change that. He activated the community and organized cleanups to prepare the stairs for a transformation.

Chavez recruited L.A. artist Sergio Robleto to help make the stairway a place the community wanted to go. Robleto painted the 300-plus stairs in vibrant, colorful patterns and created a large mural adorned with the words "One Step at a Time."

"What used to be this no-go thoroughfare that required a 20-minute detour around the hill is now a pleasant but strenuous walk," said Leo Lerner, a PhD student at USC Dornsife's Spatial Sciences Institute, who helped with the project.

So off Ramsay-Stamps went, back to California and a new home where she lived with her aunt and uncle—who later became her second parents. Given the opportunity and surrounded by people who believed she could succeed, Ramsay-Stamps excelled. Fresno State "had really good Black and Latino faculty and staff who looked out for students like me," Ramsay-Stamps says. She also became friends with other students in similar circumstances. The support network lifted her and others up. "We were all thriving," she says. Ramsay-Stamps was a student-body senator and graduated with her bachelor's in sociology.

Ramsay-Stamps balanced her college studies with the challenges and responsibilities of being a new mom. She and her husband, Darrell Stamps, raised their first child when the two were students at Fresno State.

After graduation, the family moved to Washington, D.C., where Ramsay-Stamps worked as a speechwriter and legislative aide for Harold Ford Jr., the former congressman from Tennessee. There, she was introduced to policy "with a big P."

She loved the experience: "It was mind-blowing to see the level at which young people are actually running the country. It was exciting and exhilarating to see things moving super fast, in terms of the way we were developing public policy, but the end result, as we know, is very slow [and it] takes a couple of years [for an] actual bill to pass."

Ramsay-Stamps considered running for office after working on Capitol Hill, but she and her family decided to return to Fresno, where she began working in local government. She wanted to be engaged in public policymaking, but her time in D.C. showed her that the ones working behind the scenes were often making the wheels of government turn. She worked as an executive policy and budget analyst for the city of Fresno, where she acquired an intimate understanding of housing and economic development and how federal funds "play themselves out on the ground." She then moved on to a company that provided tax recovery and enhancement work for government agencies.

As she gained experience and contacts, she decided to launch her own business, The Ramsay Group, a global consulting firm that assists public and nonprofit organizations with urban planning and development services.

When the 2008 financial crisis struck, Ramsay-Stamps and her family were hit hard. Many of their clients—small and medium-sized cities and nonprofits—were in financial peril. The family decided to sell everything and move to the L.A. area. They had existing clients in the area and decided the region was where they wanted to successfully "reboot the business," Ramsay-Stamps says. They settled in the city of Santa Clarita in northern L.A. County.

Soon after, Ramsay-Stamps found her mind returning to academics. "I wanted to branch out, do something a little more hands on and connected to challenges facing communities of color in L.A.," she says.

This desire to grow her network and break out of



“I’m looking to explore the best models on the planet Earth for communities of color, like Crenshaw.”

—Veda Ramsay-Stamps MPA ’18,
executive director of the Crenshaw Family YMCA

consulting led her to the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy, where she completed her master’s. With her years of policy work and experience working at the national and local level, Ramsay-Stamps entered the master’s program confidently. But she soon realized her math skills needed boosting. Her early years when she experienced interruptions in her education, left her without a strong foundation in math. She had no problem leaning on Excel and calculators when operating her business, but at USC, her economics and finance professor was asking her to work out equations “from scratch,” she says.

It was a challenge, but one she rose to. She sought tutoring and soon was able to create a foundation in math that she wasn’t given an opportunity to build as a child.

Soon after graduating from Price, Ramsay-Stamps took a job with the YMCA as the regional mission advancement development director, in which she oversaw several branches throughout the city. Although she was working at a community-based organization, she says she still didn’t feel as if “she was in the heart of L.A.”

When an opening to lead the branch in Crenshaw came up, she was approached to take on the position. At first, she resisted. “I was like, what? That’s not even a promotion,” she recalls with a laugh. But she found something was pulling her back to the area where she spent intermittent periods of her youth.

Shortly after she accepted the position and was heading to work, she found herself taking a few back roads. Suddenly, she realized that a location near her new workplace was also a place where she experienced great trauma as a child. At that point, she knew that her new role was more than just a job: It was a calling. It felt like she was coming home, not only to face this trauma, but also to make this place where she experienced hardship better for today’s youth.

“I knew it was imperative to set the systems in place for little girls like me who live in this community to succeed.

It is an overwhelming feeling, the way things have fallen into place,” Ramsay-Stamps says.

“It’s a tale of two communities here—some of the wealthiest individuals in L.A. live in Baldwin Hills, View Park and Windsor Hills, right next to the poorest communities in the city,” she says. “There’s a lot of opportunity to be innovative and unique, and garner resources to get the work done. Crenshaw is in the midst of a cultural rebirth and has a long legacy and ties to athletes, artists and entertainers. The approach with my team is to elevate and bridge those assets of creativity and sports to educational, technological and environmental resources that will foster the development of the whole child in L.A.,” Ramsay-Stamps says.

A CHANCE TO REIMAGINE

Crenshaw is in South Los Angeles, about 5 miles from USC’s University Park campus. The neighborhood has a storied history and has long been a hub for Black culture in Los Angeles. But before the 1948 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that struck down covenants that prevented non-White residents from living in certain parts of L.A., the neighborhood’s residents were mostly White and middle class. After 1948, the neighborhood became a destination for Japanese Americans as well as Black families. However, the drug epidemic of the 1980s, along with the subsequent “War on Drugs” and the L.A. riots of the early 1990s, took their toll on the community, as crime spiked, families left and businesses closed. In the past 20 years, the demographics of the neighborhood have also shifted, as Latinos have moved

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Veda-Ramsay Stamps in front of the mural designed by L.A. artist Chris Burnett through a partnership with the Jordan Brand and Russell Westbrook’s Why Not? Foundation. The mural was unveiled in summer 2021.

FEATURE

in. However, Crenshaw has remained a hotbed for arts and culture and Black-owned businesses (p. 19).

The Crenshaw YMCA opened in 1952 at the intersection of Santa Rosalia Drive and Marlton Avenue, just across from the Baldwin Hills Crenshaw mall. When Ramsay-Stamps took the job as executive director, her colleagues and superiors knew she didn't have the typical "swim and gym" background of most branch leaders. Instead, her approach would center the YMCA as a hub for the community, somewhere residents would come for everything from job fairs to after-school programming for kids.

Athletics would still be a focus, but as part of an assortment of offerings. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the pivot to other services came quickly. Ramsay-Stamps, with her background in community and policy work, was well-positioned to transform the Crenshaw Family Y into a nucleus for the community's needs. The Y became a location for food distribution in the early days of the pandemic, with lines of residents wrapping around the block to pick up food.

Ramsay-Stamps also saw that not all the children in the neighborhood had access to free, reliable internet and computers at home to attend remote school. So, she got to work and brought in a new partner, Salesforce, to address these digital challenges. The San Francisco-based software company outfitted the YMCA with high-speed Wi-Fi and provided the kids with Chromebooks. Some Salesforce employees even volunteered to tutor the kids for several months.

As Ramsay-Stamps was reimagining—by necessity—the role of the YMCA in the community, the very space of the building was also being reimagined. The redesign, which Ramsay-Stamps refers to as "Phase 1," involved a collaboration between the Jordan Brand and NBA star Russell Westbrook's Why Not? Foundation.

Westbrook grew up in Crenshaw and played basketball at the Crenshaw YMCA. During the renovation, the basketball court was transformed with a floor-to-ceiling mural on one wall by L.A. artist Chris Burnett and beautiful wood flooring. The Jr. Clippers basketball program remains a huge draw, and on any given night, the thump of balls and voices of children and teens can be heard throughout the gym. Family members often linger, watching the kids from the bleachers and speaking with the other families.

For Otis Noble III, the basketball program provides a chance to connect his son, Nico, to the Black community. Noble, who works at UCLA as an assistant director for community engagement, enrolled his son in a private school, but the Jr. Clippers program is giving Nico an opportunity to build relationships with more kids who look like himself. Noble praises Ramsay-Stamps' efforts to unite the community. She's "doing it for the kids," he says, and she's able to do it "because of who she is."

Many other spaces at the YMCA were also renovated during Phase 1; the building was outfitted with a new computer lab and a Why Not? Room, an area where kids can lounge and watch movies or attend presentations from



“Community means providing support systems to those who lack those supports within their family structure. It means creating an atmosphere where one feels loved, appreciated and valued.”

—Veda Ramsay-Stamps MPA '18

the creative and inspiring minds that Ramsay-Stamps and community partners bring in to speak. Recent speakers have included technologist Iddris Sandu and skateboarder and Stanford graduate Tobias McIntosh, who founded Crenshaw Skate Membership at age 14.

Phase 2 renovations include an emphasis on "biophilic design"—that is, design meant to enhance occupants' connectivity to the natural environment. It's a special cause for Ramsay-Stamps, and the focus of her dissertation. Residents of Crenshaw do not enjoy the same access to greenspaces as their wealthier White neighbors. In areas with higher populations of White residents have around 32 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, compared with less than 2 acres per 1,000 residents in communities that are majority Black and Latino.

At the Crenshaw YMCA, plans are underway to create an urban food and digital garden, an indoor/outdoor Sports Performance Wellness Center and Learning Lab through a partnership with the USC Office of the Provost and USC Iovine and Young Academy. While the YMCA had a garden



↑ Autumn (center) adds another weight to test the strength of the bridge she created with her partner Paula (left), as Angel (right) watches.

in the past, its upkeep proved difficult. Ramsay-Stamps, through the collaboration, is considering several methods of sustainability, from robotics to automated vertical gardens that accentuate the current Crenshaw Family YMCA programming. She sees the garden as an opportunity not only for residents to participate in the growing of fruits and vegetables but also for the kids to witness and be a part of innovative uses of technology, with USC students guiding them. “We’re delighted to join the Crenshaw Y in reimagining an urban garden that fosters healthy behaviors, creativity, as well as individual and collective growth,” said Trent Jones, Academy faculty lead for the project. “With the development of this garden, we hope it creates more green space through community collaboration.”

EDUCATION AS THE NORTH STAR

For Ramsay-Stamps, education is central. It’s what led her to USC Rossier. She’s witnessed first-hand the challenge of attending schools identified as the nation’s most underperforming, and her time working in local government reinforced her belief that education—and creating equal access to quality education—is one of the most valuable tools. After all, Ramsay-Stamps is living proof of the benefits of quality education coupled with a supportive environment.

“Education is where the biggest problems are for our community. That’s where the challenges live,” says Ramsay-Stamps. Innovation, coordination and resources are particularly lacking in education, she says. She aims to lean on her private-sector experience and public policymaking perspective to help tackle some of the deep-rooted educational issues in communities like Crenshaw. The issues are ones she’s come to understand more intimately through her studies in USC Rossier’s Global EdD program.

The travel component of the program was especially attractive to Ramsay-Stamps. While she is currently focused on local, on-the-ground community work, she’s always had the ability to oscillate easily between the details and the bigger picture. The program has given her a chance to study educational systems around the world. “I’m looking to explore the best models on the planet Earth for communities of color, like Crenshaw,” she says. “I know I’m not going to be the one to change everything, but I’m hoping that I can add my little nuggets in my subject matter.”

Ramsay-Stamps and USC Rossier hope to expand the facility’s educational offerings by serving as a Learning Lab, hosting a speaker series and creating additional pipelines for more low-income students of color.

To collectively lift up children who face the hardships Ramsay-Stamps experienced as a child, “it takes a community effort,” she says—“the private sector, educational institutions, community-based organizations all actively coordinating together to correct those challenges.”

Ramsay-Stamps thinks back to her days in New Orleans. “Even though I had struggles, the community

What Is Biophilic Design?

Biophilic design might seem like a new and modern invention, but the concept of connecting our living spaces to the natural world can be traced back to antiquity, with the Hanging Gardens of Babylon as a prime example.

The benefits of spending time in nature have been well-documented, and Veda Ramsay-Stamps MPA ’18 is exploring how biophilia “impacts Black children in the K–12 space.” Schools, in particular, are not well-known for their ability to connect children to the natural world. Instead, students often sit in classrooms fashioned from cinderblocks, with small windows or none at all, under fluorescent lights and breathing recirculated air.

Ramsay-Stamps is interested in exploring how to create spaces that don’t “look like the prison system,” she says. In her dissertation, she is focusing on the experience of Black children and how we might rethink educational spaces to create “greener and healthier environments to help our kids flourish.” USC Rossier Professor of Clinical Education Tracy Tambascia, who is the chair of Ramsay-Stamps’ dissertation committee, says her work “on the importance of nature and the natural world and their influence on student learning builds on her professional work with youth in urban settings.” In Phase 2 of the Crenshaw YMCA’s renovation plans, Ramsay-Stamps will weave in aspects of biophilic design into the space.

Children from places like Crenshaw do not have as much access to greenspaces outside of school as kids in other parts of Los Angeles. Ramsay-Stamps wants to rectify this by exposing kids from Crenshaw and areas like it to “direct nature,” as she calls it. Her focus “on biophilia re-frames the conversation about schools, learning and efficacy to include how Black and African American children respond to their built environments, to green spaces and the sense of inquiry and freedom that those spaces invite,” says Tambascia.

vibe of Pontchartrain Park is the epitome of what I want other children to feel: to know your teachers care about you, even if they’re tough with you, neighbors who are watching out for you, and a walkable environment, one you feel safe in,” she says.

“Community means providing support systems to those who lack those supports within their family structure,” she adds. “It means creating an atmosphere where one feels loved, appreciated and valued. Community—even when I hear the word, I think happiness.” —R

IN CONVERSATION



Interview: Kianoosh Hashemzadeh

Illustration: Heather Monahan

‘Teachers Are Doing the Most Important Job in the World’

Margo Pensavalle EdD ’93 draws on nearly 50 years
of experience in education to create a residency
program that meets the moment.

IN CONVERSATION

You helped create USC Rossier's new MAT Teacher Preparation Residency program. Tell me more about your role.

Karen Gallagher, our former dean, knew Karen DeMoss, who had launched the Bank Street College of Education program Prepared to Teach, and she said, "Why don't we look into it?" I got in touch with Karen DeMoss, and we ended up doing our first residency through Prepared to Teach. The residency went well; we had a diverse group of residents teaching sixth through eighth grade at John Burroughs Middle School. When Dean Pedro Noguera came, I said to him, "you know, we just finished a residency program," and he said, "Oh, yeah, tell me about that." Six residents had finished the program on time with credentials, and they all got jobs, but because of COVID, the funds for the next residency were reallocated at the state level. Dean Pedro Noguera went to work on it. He found us funding, and we started working in partnership with LAUSD. We provide scholarships, and they provide living stipends. Our first six residents enrolled in fall 2021 and are due to graduate this spring (p. 32).

Districts across the nation are facing a teacher shortage. Why are teachers leaving the profession early, and what prevents potential teachers from pursuing the profession?

The role of a teacher has shifted dramatically, and it continues to shift, especially through the pandemic. When I first started working full time at USC Rossier in 2004, we were focused on good, strong pedagogical instruction. We wanted our candidates going into the classroom knowing what to do instructionally, with confidence. However, we learned that you need to teach the whole child. Kids come into the classroom with needs, and the teacher is the person who has to address those needs. Some kids approach learning on a superhighway; some go on a bumpy road. Making relationships with kids to make either road, and all those in between, accessible is the foundation of everything we do.

We need to teach the content, put out good democratic citizens, and help kids heal from whatever they've experienced outside of school—and sometimes in school. Kids need more than the content in schools. They need support, friendship, and people to value them and give them a voice toward empowerment.

And to do that for every kid—which we need to—can be challenging.

Before the residency, many students came to and graduated from the MAT with a great deal of debt, going into a job that starts at around \$52,000. How can that be? For most teachers, it's not all about the money. There are so many people in it for the right reasons. And if we don't change the debt and support picture, we're going to lose them.

"Kids come into the classroom with needs, and the teacher is the person who has to address those needs. Some kids approach learning on a superhighway; some go on a bumpy road."

How can we, as a society, help encourage teachers to enter and stay in the profession?

At USC, we have had difficulty recruiting teachers from our undergraduate population, but two of our residents this year are USC grads (p. 33 and 34). The rate of teachers leaving the profession has stayed fairly consistent. Around 44% of teachers leave after their third year, but around 80% to 90% of teaching residents stay after their first three years. There are a couple of reasons: They don't have as much student debt, and the graduates are ready to be in the classroom. We need to prepare teachers well. We need to pay them well and support them.

A team approach that *really* is a team approach is also important. If we had psychologists, nurses and counselors—who come more than just once a week or month—and a teacher was the manager of that team, that

would make a big difference. Teachers are doing the most important job in the world. We say that to our students, but the rest of the world doesn't say it.

What's the most challenging job you've had in your career?

My first teaching job was one of my most challenging jobs. I did not have a lot of support, and I left at Christmastime. I became a statistic: I was a teacher dropout. I had taken a few long-term sub jobs after college and went on to become an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer. I went for a year to eastern North Carolina, and then I came back to Boston where I'm from. I took a resource specialist position in Jamaica Plain. The school had never had an RSP before, and I was dealing with kids who needed more than RSP support. I had a parent come into my classroom and shove me up against the wall. I said, "That's it. I don't need this." So, I left my job and moved to California. And then as quickly as possible, I got my teaching credentials again. I started teaching and worked for L.A. County for around 16 years.

What can schools of education do to help prepare future educators for the unique challenges of teaching?

We could support them financially and make sure that we have a culturally diverse population of teacher candidates. We're starting a new initiative, with the Neighborhood Academic Initiative (p. 10), and some of the MAT classes are going to be taught out at the schools. Pulling our partners into our role and jumping into theirs can only help. That's how the things we do become relevant and become pertinent to what kids need to know.

Some people think that schools of education are superfluous—they think candidates should go out into the schools and learn as apprentices. But there's so much more to it. When we first put the MAT program together, we subscribed to a sociocultural approach. We acknowledged that academics and social learning were equally important. I hope we always remember that, because kids need the social learning now more than ever.

—R

☞ This interview has been edited for length and clarity. For the extended interview, please visit rossier.usc.edu.

The Future Teachers of Los Angeles

Meet the first class of
USC Rossier's new
Teacher Preparation
Residency program

Story:
Nadra Kareem Nittle

Photos:
Rafael Hernandez



THE SIX STUDENTS WHO MAKE UP THE INAUGURAL class of the USC Rossier School of Education’s Teacher Preparation Residency (p. 14) all took different routes to a teaching career. Some felt destined to become educators, and others had transformative experiences that sparked their interest in the profession. Now, they all hope to make a difference by serving in schools where students come from economic or ethnic backgrounds similar to their own. Too often, children from disadvantaged communities lack access to highly qualified teachers, but the residency program is arming participants with the skills needed to excel and form authentic connections with the youth in their classrooms.

After completing a year in this accelerated program, the inaugural six, who will graduate this spring, looked back on their experiences as student teachers in the Los Angeles Unified School District. They discussed the highlights of the teacher residency program, how the scholarship and living stipend they received changed their lives, and their hopes as future educators.

ELIJAH CHESLEY BA ’21

Elijah Chesley BA ’21 always knew he’d be a teacher.

“I come from a family of educators,” he says. “My mom is a professor. My grandparents on both sides were teachers or janitors in schools, and even my great-aunt and great-uncle were teachers. I feel like it’s just something that I was born to do.”

Naturally, when he found out that USC Rossier and the LAUSD were teaming up on a teacher residency program to better serve urban schools, he viewed it as a “golden opportunity.” The 23-year-old had already earned a bachelor’s degree in American studies and ethnicity from USC in May 2021. But having grown up in Bakersfield, Calif., where most people he encountered were middle class, Chesley wanted to make a difference in the lives of economically disadvantaged students.

“Having an opportunity to teach in Los Angeles, in these schools where resources aren’t as available as they are in other communities, or seeing a student body predominantly populated by students of color, that’s just refreshing to me,” says Chesley, who plans to continue teaching in similar school environments.

Through the program, Chesley student-taught at Augustus Hawkins High School in South Los Angeles. There, he felt a particular responsibility to be a role model because Black men like himself make up only 2 percent of the nation’s teachers. In the program, through which he will receive a secondary social studies credential, he also confronted his own “internalized racism.” He credits this development to a course on racial bias in education he took with Eric Medrano, an adjunct professor at USC.

“People always had their own ideas about me because I’m a Black person, and I learned that if you have internalized racism, it could transfer over to your students,” he says. “So it’s important that you get rid of it before you



“I feel like it’s just something that I was born to do.”

begin teaching, and that class really opened my eyes to a whole lot of different concepts.”

Chesley also considers the work he collaborated on with fellow students in the teacher residency program to be a highlight. He says he learned almost as much from his peers as he did from his professors.

While Chesley speaks fondly of the program, he says it was hard work balancing coursework with his student teaching and an on-campus job. He recommends that anyone interested in the residency program take care of their emotional and physical needs.

“Stay organized and prioritize your mental health,” he says, “because if you don’t really stay organized, you’re probably going to fall behind in the class or in student teaching, and everything can tumble down.”

But Chesley says he enjoys overcoming challenges, including entering the education profession during a pandemic, a teacher shortage and what has widely been described as a hostile political climate for educators.

“I am aware that it is difficult right now,” he says. “I feel like students have probably lost some skills that they would not have lost otherwise if the pandemic didn’t happen, but I try to be optimistic in everything in life. There’s more to it than having an easy job. I’d rather have something that challenges me and brings the best out of me.”

← The inaugural class of USC Rossier’s new Teacher Preparation Residency program in front of the Traveler statue at USC’s University Park Campus. Back row, left to right: Elijah Chesley BA ’21 and Joseph Arechiga; front row, left to right: Ramiro Alexander-Duchesne BA ’17, Jamie Roman Nunez, Lauryn Merriweather and Derringer Dillingham

➤ For Elijah Chesley BA ’21, the fountain in Alumni Park has always felt like “the heart of campus. There’s the USC bushes, Tommy Trojan statue and Traveler statue all in sight. When I think of USC, I always think of that region of campus,” he says.

FEATURE

LAURYN MERRIWEATHER

“Life-changing.” That’s what kind of impact the teacher residency program had on Lauryn Merriweather. Without the scholarship and living stipend she received, the 24-year-old doubts she would’ve been able to complete graduate studies in teaching, let alone earn a dual elementary and educational specialist credential.

“My family has gone through a lot of changes during the pandemic,” says Merriweather, who graduated from San Diego State University in 2020 with a degree in speech, language and hearing sciences. “My father lost his job, and everybody’s lives got flipped upside down. My dad suffered through a lot of health conditions during the pandemic, as well, that unexpectedly required a lot of medical bills, so I really needed this scholarship. It was a blessing.”

Merriweather says she’s been interested in teaching for years. Encountering children with disabilities as a speech pathology student and working as a teacher’s assistant after earning her bachelor’s degree only confirmed that education was the career for her. Still, she wasn’t altogether confident that she would be accepted into the program. She painstakingly worked on her application and sought admission into the program anyway, a move she describes as a “leap of faith.”

After enrolling, she became a student teacher at Figueroa Street Elementary School, south of downtown Los Angeles. A USC course she took called “Applications of Curriculum and Pedagogy” enhanced her experience teaching at the school. In the course, she learned about differentiating instruction and creativity in the classroom. The goal, she says, is to move away from conventional ways of teaching and implement transformative learning practices.

Merriweather grew up in the Leimert Park neighborhood of Los Angeles and wants to give back to the city by teaching. “After I finish the program, I want to teach in LAUSD in a community of color where I can add representation and empower the students that are there that have been historically marginalized,” she says.

In addition to the classes she’s taken in the program, Merriweather has appreciated the students she’s taught, the guidance she’s received from veteran educators as a student teacher and her interactions with classmates. Although her classmates come from a variety of backgrounds, they all managed to bond, according to Merriweather.

“The people that I’ve met have been a highlight,” she says. “The kids that I met in my school placement have been a highlight, and my guiding teachers have been a highlight. Learning from them and having them critique my teaching practice have helped me better my teaching.”

As she wraps up the teacher residency program, Merriweather plans to continue growing as an educator. She recommends that future students in the program be willing to challenge themselves and their understanding of the teaching profession.

“Be flexible,” she says. “Be willing to learn. Be open-



Lauryn Merriweather chose to be photographed in front of the Patsy and Forrest Shumway Fountain because it plays a role in one of her favorite campus memories—attending USC’s homecoming football game with friends. “This spot is a reminder of good times, laughter, and friendships that have been made during my Trojan journey,” Merriweather says.

mind, and just be patient with yourself. The process of being a teacher is a lifelong learning journey, so even after we come out of this program, there will always be something for us to learn. We’re learning for our students in order to give them a better educational experience.”

RAMIRO ALEXANDER-DUCHESNE BA '17,

When Ramiro Alexander-Duchesne BA '17 signed up to be a substitute teacher for the Los Angeles Unified School District in 2019, he had no intention of pursuing education as a profession. Subbing, he says, was simply a way to supplement his income. At the time, he was a ghostwriter for corporate clients, wrote stories for various publications and had an interest in screenplays and short stories.

Once he began subbing, however, Alexander-Duchesne found his experiences in the classroom to be revelatory. As a teacher, he realized he could make a profound impact on young people.

“I developed a passion for being in the classroom and impacting students in a positive way and building

“The process of being a teacher is a lifelong learning journey.”



relationships with them,” he says. “Even if I was just there for a day or two, I was still able to impact them in some sort of positive way, just by talking to them, getting to know them and making them feel safe and comfortable and like they truly matter. For me, that was what really drew me to education as a long-term actual career.”

Alexander-Duchesne graduated from USC in 2017 with a bachelor’s degree in narrative studies. He almost didn’t apply to the Teacher Preparation Residency program because he thought his liberal arts background and interest in obtaining a secondary credential in narrative studies would be a disadvantage. He figured that STEM candidates would have a better chance of getting accepted. Then, he thought to himself, “What’s the worst that could happen?” he recalls. “I really had nothing to lose, and I would’ve kicked myself if I hadn’t tried. I ended up being accepted. I was shocked, honestly.”

Looking back on his year in the program, the 27-year-old says that a course he took on lesson planning particularly stands out. As a substitute teacher, he didn’t plan for classes, and the teachers he covered rarely left behind lesson plans for him. A self-described “creative” type, he’s connected with students by including references to his beloved Marvel movies in his lessons.

“I’m sure a lot of teacher preparation programs teach students to plan this way, but [at USC] they like to have us start off with a motivating activity to kind of get the students engaged right away,” Alexander-Duchesne says. “Nine times out of 10, my motivating activity was something related to Marvel movies.”

Planning engaging lessons for students has been a highlight for Alexander-Duchesne, but the biggest challenge he faced during the program was commuting 80 miles roundtrip from Hesperia to Los Angeles. Born in Long Beach and raised primarily in the Inland Empire, he bought a home in Hesperia during the pandemic. He plans to move to Los Angeles once he finds a teaching job. For now, though, despite the challenge of commuting, and of teaching during the coronavirus crisis and at a time when education has been under intense scrutiny, he takes it all in stride.

“My life has been full of adversity,” he says. “So, entering teaching during a tense time—for me, I feel like there’s never not going to be a tense time. I’m not really too worried about all of the sociopolitical stuff going on. I’m concerned with it, but it doesn’t impact my excitement to be a teacher.”

JAMIE ROMAN NUNEZ

Jamie Roman Nunez once resisted becoming a teacher. Although she was drawn to the profession from a young age, she initially chose to major in a more lucrative field—business economics—as a student at UCLA.

“I always knew I wanted to be a teacher, but I guess I was avoiding it,” she says. “I didn’t want to accept that this is really for me. ... But now I 100 percent know that I did make the right decision, and I’m passionate about it.”

Once the 23-year-old accepted that teaching was the



“Making students feel like they truly matter is what drew me to education.”

right profession for her, she had to figure out what she needed to do to become an educator. Eventually, she found her way to USC’s teacher residency program application.

“I’m very grateful,” she says of her acceptance into the program. “It’s scary when you’re a senior in college and you’re trying to figure it all out.”

Roman Nunez graduated from UCLA in 2021 having majored in Spanish, community and culture and double-minored in education studies and Chicana/o studies. As an MAT student at USC, she shifted gears, pursuing a secondary teaching credential in math, a subject that has always interested her, she says.

As a woman of color, she hopes to inspire students from similar backgrounds, especially as a STEM educator. She had two Latina math teachers growing up, and in the residency program, she served a predominantly Latinx student body at South Gate High School.

Roman Nunez appreciated that her USC Rossier professors told her that “they’re looking for teachers that look like the students they teach,” she says. “That really stood out to me because that’s my goal.”

The classes she took during the teacher residency program also emphasized equity. She says she learned about the importance of self-reflection, including questioning the values she grew up with, to better serve diverse groups of students. She also learned about teaching students with learning differences. Generally, she thinks the program has made her more empathetic, compassionate and patient.

↑ When Ramiro Alexander-Duchesne BA '17 was a kid, his mother often took him to the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. On one of these visits, when he was five years old, he asked her about the buildings across from the museum. She told him those buildings were part of the USC campus, and he told her that one day, he'd attend USC.



“I believe in the program’s values, and I’m fulfilling that mission at South Gate High School.”

Through it all, she’s been able to focus on her studies without worrying about her finances. Roman Nunez didn’t just distinguish herself through her selection to the teacher residency program; she also won the Leo F. Buscaglia Endowed Fellowship. The award bears the name of a former USC professor who graduated from a predominantly Latinx high school and wanted to provide educational opportunities to students who have similar upbringings and are interested in teaching in urban schools.

Roman Nunez is a graduate of Jordan High School, a mostly Black and Brown school in economically disadvantaged North Long Beach. “I’m grateful for the Buscaglia scholarship,” she says. “I’m able to dedicate 100 percent of my effort and my passion to school, to my student teaching and to my grad work. I’m so blessed that I don’t have to worry about affording graduate tuition.”

Although Roman Nunez is a highly accomplished student, she still had to muster up the courage to pursue her dream of being a teacher. She advises other students interested in applying for the residency program not to let fear keep them from trying.

“Everyone who wants to apply should apply,” she says. “They’re qualified. They’re more than deserving of it. It’s just taking that first step. And that first step is believing in yourself.”

↑
During her undergraduate studies, Jamie Roman Nunez took the Expo Line every Friday to visit her family in Long Beach and would pass by USC. “At the time,” she says, “I was overwhelmed about my future. Little did I know that four years later USC would be my new home. My future was right in front of me the entire time.”

DERRINGER DILLINGHAM

If it weren’t for a high school community-service requirement, Derringer Dillingham might never have become a teacher.

“I went to Palisades Charter High School,” he says. “One of the graduation requirements was to do community service hours, and I decided to do them at my local elementary school. I just enjoyed working with kids from then on, and I was good enough to where the school offered me a position after I graduated.”

He became a teacher’s assistant at the school and went on to become a special education assistant teacher and a substitute for LAUSD. After graduating from California State University, Northridge, with a bachelor’s degree in communications in 2017, Dillingham remained a special education assistant teacher, but he didn’t seriously consider becoming a teacher until he found out about USC Rossier’s Teacher Preparation Residency.

“I can pretty much, with confidence, say that I don’t think I would be doing my master’s program at USC without the residency,” he says. “The residency scholarship is why I’m pursuing my teacher credential. It’s given me a way to do it because I can’t see a way where I would have gone this route without it. I can’t be grateful enough.”

During the residency, Dillingham student-taught at two elementary schools in South Los Angeles. Raised in the area himself, the 31-year-old is passionate about teaching kids who look like him and whose experiences mirror his own. Working with students who share his background is his goal, he says. And though he’s also worked with middle and high school students, he says that his experiences with elementary students have lingered with him because of the impact that he can make on a young child’s life.

“There’s this feeling you get when you’ve impacted a child like that,” he says. “Maybe you don’t remember what you did exactly, but you might see that child and they’ll run up to you and remember, and it’s a cool little feeling. There’s actually none other that I’ve had like it. That’s why I enjoy what I do.”

Dillingham has also enjoyed the sense of community he’s felt as part of the program. He says that professors such as Margo Pensavalle and Cassandra Grady have been particularly supportive, as have his fellow classmates. They all lean on each other and are comfortable sharing their experiences in the program.

“My fellow cohort and classmates have been the most valuable and the best part of the program so far,” he says.

The program has involved a rigorous workload. He says it moved at an accelerated pace and included lots of reading materials and lesson planning.

“Do your due diligence before you apply,” he suggests to prospective applicants. “Understand what’s going to be asked of you because there are going to be a lot of long nights. It’s going to be tough work.”

JOSEPH ARECHIGA

Coaching high school volleyball in Los Angeles a few years ago first sparked Joseph Arechiga's interest in teaching. He often found himself helping the students he coached with their schoolwork.

"I started falling in love with teaching, but at the time, I was just a coach, so I felt underqualified to really give them help academically," says the 26-year-old from Sun Valley, a neighborhood in the San Fernando Valley region of Los Angeles. "But they always kept coming to me."

When he told them to ask their teachers for help instead, the students insisted that he explained their assignments better than their instructors did. Ultimately, watching the students progress academically and athletically motivated Arechiga to become a teacher. After graduating last year from the University of California, Santa Barbara, with a bachelor's degree in sociology and applied psychology, he decided to apply to USC's teacher residency program.

"I got the scholarship, and I felt absolutely blessed and so excited because USC is a dream school that I couldn't afford for undergrad," he says. "I was absolutely ecstatic."

He felt particularly overjoyed to attend USC because both his father and uncle are alums. Additionally, getting into his dream school sends the message to his Hispanic

"The residency scholarship is why I'm pursuing my teacher credential."



→

Joseph Arechiga chose to be photographed at the Exposition Park Rose Garden. "My family and I would come have picnics at this specific location, and in my mind it always represented a place of accomplishment and joy." For Arechiga, graduating from USC represents "a lifelong goal," and the Rose Garden embodies "the fulfillment of this dream."



"I love hearing that I've inspired my students because I'm going to USC."

students that they, too, can get into a top university, Arechiga says. "For these kids to have someone who looks like them or grew up similar to them just means something a little bit different, and I can tell it's very much appreciated," he says. "I love hearing that I've inspired them because I'm going to USC."

Arechiga spent the past year earning an education specialist credential, which is designed for educators who want to work with students who have special needs. These professionals serve students who might need additional behavioral, health or instructional support. Ideally, he will use the credential to enter the special education realm, he says.

Reflecting on his time pursuing his credential, Arechiga says he really appreciates his peers in the teacher residency program. Being in a "super-accelerated program" hasn't been easy, and his classmates have been a great source of support, he says.

"We're all struggling," he says. "We're all grinding. It's really nice to know that there's a group of teachers who are willing to go through all this to become teachers, and we're all doing it together. It's been amazing. The camaraderie between my peers has been really something to cherish."

He also appreciates his students, many of whom cheered him on as a student teacher, he says. He's learned as much from them as they've learned from him, Arechiga adds. Although he's bonded with both his classmates and his students, he says there were also challenging times during the teacher residency program. In those moments, he had to remind himself that his ultimate goal as an educator is to help change lives.

"It's a program for people who want to make a change and put in the work that goes with that," Arechiga says. "So, it won't be easy, but it's definitely worthwhile." —R

←

When Derringer Dillingham was asked to select a location for an individual portrait, the Grace Apartment Hotel was "an immediate no brainer." The historic building located on Adams Boulevard just a few blocks from the USC University Park Campus was built in the early 20th century. "Its history is tied in with my church and faith," Dillingham says. Generations of his family have lived there, and some still do, including Dillingham. The apartment he currently lives in was once rented by his great-grandmother. "Some of my favorite memories happened here."

Race-Aware Admission Policies Must Be Defended

By **Jerry Lucido**, professor of research and executive director of the USC Center for Enrollment Research, Policy and Practice



RACE-AWARE ADMISSION, the educational benefits of diversity, and equity in college admissions will soon be on trial in the Supreme Court when it takes on the Harvard and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill cases vs.

Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) later this year.

In the Harvard case, SFFA accused the university of discriminating against Asian American applicants by giving them lower personal ratings and holding them to higher academic standards. SFFA similarly argued in its case against UNC that the institution gave preference to Black, Latino and Native American applicants over White and Asian American applicants.

Both Harvard and UNC presented compelling cases in federal court proceedings, where they prevailed, for the lawful use of race-aware admission policies to diversify their student bodies. However, with the Supreme Court now taking the case brought forth by the SFFA, more than 40 years of legal precedent is at stake affirming higher education's educational diversity interests.

Colleges and universities are and should be worried about the Supreme Court's action, as should leaders in business and industry, the military, and educational institutions and organizations, among others. Specifically for higher education, the ability of institutions to consider all the information available about an applicant as part of an individualized, holistic review process is in jeopardy.

The consideration of an applicant's race in context is central to the advancement of equity interests as well as to enhancing the quality of the education provided. Contrary to public perceptions, such processes, when appropriately designed and implemented, do not categorically or mechanically favor any individual student based on



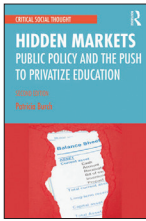
their race or ethnicity. In reality—and as demonstrated in the Harvard and UNC litigation—the consideration of race involves a review of an applicant's background, qualities and interests in an integrated fashion, with awareness of that applicant's personal and educational context.

Colleges and universities do not rely on isolated test scores and grades as determinants of merit, as some believe. The process is much more complex, and institutions are not only evaluating candidates for institutional readiness—they are also aiming to assemble a student body of diverse cultures, perspectives and backgrounds to enhance the learning experience for every student on campus. As noted by education scholar Jeffrey Milem, such benefits include enhanced critical thinking, better problem-solving and greater levels of cross-cultural competence, to name only a few.

Reasoned and informed public engagement and amicus briefs that are empirically grounded are now critical. Longstanding legal precedent must be preserved as a foundation for success in the continuing advancement of college and university missions for the betterment of their students and all of society. There are reasons to hope that the court will fulfill its responsibility and apply governing precedent with fidelity, but if the court rules against Harvard and UNC, thus upending the use of race in the admissions process, colleges will not and should not change their equity and diversity commitments—even if such a decision could make attainment of those goals more difficult. The educational benefits of diversity are central to mission attainment at all nonprofit educational institutions that are chartered in the public interest. —R

ILLUSTRATION BY EDMON DE HARO

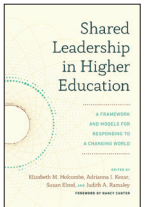
Faculty publications



Hidden Markets: Public Policy and the Push to Privatize Education

PATRICIA BURCH, professor of education at USC Rossier (Routledge / April 2021)

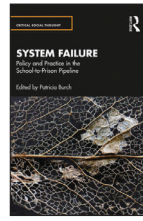
The education industry has assumed a central place in the governance and administration of public schools as test publishers, software companies and research firms take advantage of funds made available by policies like the No Child Left Behind Act and Race to the Top. *Hidden Markets* examines domains the industry has had particular influence on—home schooling, remedial instruction, management consulting, test development, data management and staff development. Burch's analysis demonstrates that only when we subject the education industry to in-depth critical analysis can we begin to demand more corporate accountability and halt the slide of education resources into the market.



Shared Leadership in Higher Education: A Framework and Models for Responding to a Changing World

Edited by **ELIZABETH M. HOLCOMBE** postdoctoral research associate at the Pullias Center for Higher Education; **ADRIANNA J. KEZAR**, professor of higher education at USC Rossier; Susan L. Elrod, chancellor

of Indiana University South Bend; and Judith A. Ramaley, president of Winona State University (Stylus Publishing / December 2021) Today's higher education challenges necessitate new forms of leadership. This book focuses on a particularly effective approach for organizations facing complex challenges: *shared leadership*. Rather than concentrating power in an individual leader at the top, shared leadership involves multiple people influencing one another across varying levels. Intended as a resource for leaders at the highest levels, such as presidents and provosts as well as mid-level leaders such as deans, directors and department chairs, the book is also addressed to faculty and staff who are interested in collaborating with campus leaders on institutional decision-making or creating new change initiatives.



System Failure: Policy and Practice in the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Edited by **PATRICIA BURCH**, professor of education at USC Rossier (Routledge / March 2022)

Intended for educators, students, policymakers and practitioners, this book provides a framework for understanding the ways in which education policy across organizational settings contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline, as documented in the literature and as observed by authors in empirical studies of justice-involved youth in regular public schools, juvenile court schools, probation settings, and alternative schools. While the problem of the school-to-prison pipeline has been well documented, this book adds critical detail and description of a policy process that tolerates the school-to-prison pipeline and stalls efforts to abolish it.



Racial Equity on College Campuses: Connecting Research and Practice

Edited by **ROYEL JOHNSON**, associate professor of education at USC Rossier, Uju Anya, associate professor of second language acquisition at Carnegie Mellon University; and Liliana M. Garces, associate professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of Texas at Austin (SUNY Press / February 2022)

The current socio-political moment—rife with racial tensions and overt bigotry—has exacerbated longstanding racial inequities in higher education. While scholars have developed conceptual tools and offered data-informed recommendations for rooting out racism in campus policies and practices, this work is largely inaccessible to the public. At the same time, practitioners and policymakers are increasingly called on to implement quick solutions to profound, structural problems. *Racial Equity on College Campuses* bridges this gap, marshaling the expertise of 19 scholars and practitioners to translate research-based findings into actionable recommendations. The strategies gathered here will prove useful to institutional actors, from the classroom to the boardroom.

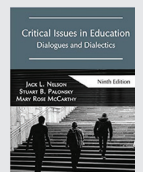
Alumni Publications



LGBTQI Workbook for CBT

Erik Schott EdD '12, clinical associate professor at USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work (Routledge / March 2021)

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is one of the most popular evidence-based interventions, but little has been done to explore how it affects different groups of people, such as the LGBTQI community. The *LGBTQI Workbook for CBT* is a hands-on guide for readers seeking additional tools, competence, and humility when working with sexual and gender minorities.



Critical Issues In Education: Dialogues and Dialectics

Jack Nelson '61, distinguished professor of education emeritus at Rutgers University, Stuart B. Palonsky, professor emeritus at Missouri University, and Mary Rose McCarthy, former associate professor at Pace University (Waveland Press / August 2020)

Critical Issues in Education examines three questions that are at the core of the education debate in the United States: What interests should schools serve? What knowledge should schools teach? How do we develop the human environment of schools? This 9th edition considers 15 topics, providing supporting evidence and reasoning for two divergent views.

Highlights From Class Notes

Class Notes are compiled and written by Matt DeGrushe ME '04, USC Rossier's director of alumni engagement. For additional Class Notes, please visit rossier.usc.edu/alumni/class-notes. To submit updates for consideration for future magazine issues, email alumni@rossier.usc.edu.

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1960s

JACK NELSON EdD '61 contributed a chapter, "Academic Freedom and Issues-Based Social Education," to *Handbook on Teaching Social Issues* (2nd Edition), published by Information Age Publishing.

SONNEE WEEDN BS '68, MS '72 received the Clark Vincent Award from the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists for her contributions to clinical applications of research for the writing of *8 Ways to Wellbeing for Recovering People*. In addition, Sonnee premiered her new documentary film, *From Sharecropper's Daughter to Surgeon General of the United States of America: The Life of Joycelyn Elders, M.D.*, at Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Ark.

1970s

LOREN LATKER MS '71 created "The Raymond Chandler Mystery Map of Greater Los Angeles," which was on view in the *Mapping Fiction* exhibition at the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens.

DONALD LEISEY EdD '73 was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by being inducted to the Wall of Honor by West Chester University of Pennsylvania College of Education and Social Work, his undergraduate alma mater.

JOANNE PITTROFF BS '76, MS '78 retired from the Pasadena Unified School District after 42 years of teaching at Daniel Webster Elementary School.

1980s

DEBORAH BERRY BS '80 retired in June 2019 after 36 years of teaching. She most recently worked as a teacher at West Hollywood Elementary School in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

RANDALL MILLER EdD '86 is a senior consultant to the chancellor of Wayne County Community College District in Detroit, where he had previously served as executive vice chancellor and president of two of the district's five campuses.

DOUGLAS TEDFORD BA '87, MS '92 leads Teaching Services Latin America, a Guatemala-based nonprofit committed to the development of effective teacher training systems for marginalized people.

TWO EdD ALUMS RECOGNIZED WITH STATEWIDE K-12 ADMINISTRATOR AWARDS



Isaac Huang EdD '16 was named the State of California Site Administrator of the Year by the California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators (CALSA) for his efforts in bringing a focus on equitable and inclusive practices through his service on the Inaugural Equity Task Force in the Conejo Valley Unified School District. In addition, he works to support the development of other educational leaders through his work on the CALSA Mentoring Committee. Isaac also seeks to amplify the voice of underrepresented communities through his work as a founding member of the California Association of Asian and Pacific Leaders in Education, a newly formed statewide organization that supports the needs of AAPI students, administrators, and educational leaders.



Kimberly MacKinney EdD '16 was named 2021 Curriculum & Instruction Administrator of the Year by the Association of California School Administrators. Kimberly is an assistant superintendent at Oro Grande School District in San Bernardino County, Calif. — **R**

Michelle Hooks MAT '17 Blends STEM to Inspire Kids

At NASA, Hooks uses her education background to connect students to real-world science.

Story:

Katharine Gammon

WHEN SHE WAS A KID GROWING UP IN LOS ANGELES, all Michelle Hooks MAT '17 wanted to do was discover how things worked. In seventh grade, she placed third in a science fair for a project building a Morse code machine, netting \$100—and an instant passion for science.

The next year, she had her eyes set on first place with a project to test how liquid's density affects its freezing point. Her mom bought her three blenders, as she kept breaking them while trying to make a centrifuge for her experiments. "Mine didn't work so well," Hooks says with a laugh. "But I figured out how to use one in a hospital to run my experiments." That year, she won first place. Her \$500 first-place prize helped her to connect her interest in science with the possibility of pursuing a career in STEM.

During high school, Hooks worked in an orthodontist's office with plans to go to dental school. She studied biology as an undergraduate at California State University, Northridge, and tutored historically underserved students—kids who were inspired the way she was in high school but who needed extra help.

But not everything came easily: She recalls spending endless hours in the tutoring lab on campus to keep up in her science classes. "It was sometimes hard for me to identify with something I loved so much but was really difficult," she says. It didn't help that she rarely saw people who looked like her in STEM careers. "I recognized how much representation matters and decided to focus my efforts to increase access to STEM," she says.

She pursued a Master of Arts in Teaching at USC Rossier, while her husband completed a residency in dental anesthesiology. Hooks' time at USC Rossier was transformative, and she began to understand pedagogical strategies to improve student learning in science. "You study very differently for an English class than you would for a physics class," she says. "I also learned how to draw on the background knowledge of students and bring that in to help them cultivate their own knowledge."



One of the major tenets of the program, she says, was to help teachers make science lessons look more like real science; it wasn't about rote memorization and recitation. That appealed to Hooks, because she was driven by curiosity.

She taught biology and astrobiology in New York while earning her master's. Then an email came from USC Rossier Professor Fred Freking: There was an internship at NASA designed to give science educators authentic experiences with lab research. Hooks thought it sounded amazing but didn't quite see herself at NASA. Freking continued to gently prod. Then Hooks watched the movie *Hidden Figures*, about Katherine Johnson and other Black women who were crucial to NASA's early space missions. She told her husband her decision: She was applying.

After her internship, Hooks was hired as an instructional coach and education coordinator at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston. There, she develops lessons, activities and challenges to connect K-12 students and teachers with the wonders of space exploration.

One of her favorite parts of working for NASA is the opportunity to help students see themselves in spaces they never imagined. She frequently speaks at schools and conferences, drawing parallels between the challenges and triumphs of spaceflight and other areas of life. After all, no one has experience as an astronaut when they are hired, she tells students. "They have to see themselves in space long before launch," she says. "The skills necessary for space exploration—like resilience, collaboration and persistence—translate to whatever your 'astronaut' dream may be."

Hooks' next challenge: dental school. —R

Michelle Hooks MAT '17 works as an education coordinator at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, where she develops learning experiences to connect students to the wonders of space exploration.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NASA JOHNSON SPACE CENTER

ALUMNI NEWS



SAN DIEGO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION, LED BY PAUL GOTHOLD EdD '17, CITED FOR BEST PRACTICES

The San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE), led by Superintendent of Schools Paul Gothold EdD '17 was cited by the Learning Policy Institute in a recent white paper for its response to the COVID-19 pandemic and how its support helped 98% of local school districts reopen for in-person learning by May 2021. Noting SDCOE has “mobilized technical assistance, leveraged partnerships, and gathered data to support districts as they have navigated initial school closure, distance learning, and planning for reopening,” the brief also describes how SDCOE supported the reopening of child care programs.

The white paper is part of a series of reopening profiles produced by the Learning Policy Institute to disseminate key public health research and reopening strategies to educators and policymakers. The Learning Policy Institute conducts and communicates independent, high-quality research to improve education policy and practice. Working with policymakers, researchers, educators, community groups, and others, the institute seeks to advance evidence-based policies that support empowering and equitable learning for each and every child. Nonprofit and nonpartisan, the institute connects policymakers and stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels with the evidence, ideas, and actions needed to strengthen the education system from preschool through college and career readiness. —R

1990s

KAY FAULCONER BOGER EdD '93, former acting vice president of instruction at the San Diego College of Continuing Education, assumed the role of interim president after the previous president, Carlos O. Turner Cortez PhD '06), became chancellor of the San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) on July 1, 2021.

JANICE FILER EdD '93 teaches at the university level after retiring from Long Beach Unified School District as a high school principal. Janice recently graduated from Pepperdine University with a PhD in global leadership and change.

2000s

JANETTE BROWN ME '04, EdD '04 received the 2021 Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE) HERO (Higher Education Retirement Organization) Distinguished Leadership Award for significant contributions, distinguished leadership and service.

JENNIFER VEGA LA SERNA MS '04 is the assistant superintendent/vice president of academic services at College of the Sequoias in Visalia, Calif. She has been elected as a commissioner to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, where she will serve a three-year term.

KIMBERLY WHITE-SMITH EdD '04, dean of the LaFetra College of Education at the University of La Verne, was appointed to be the independent, higher education sector's representative to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC).

SERENA GOULD MS '05 earned her PhD in English literature and criticism from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in December.

SARAH PEYRE MS '05, EdD '08 is taking a brief leave from serving as the dean of the Warner School of Education to be the interim provost while the University of Rochester conducts a national search.

DAMITA MILLER EdD '07 is an instructional director/principal supervisor of elementary schools in Long Beach Unified School District.

ERIK OHLSON MA '08 accepted the newly created position of visual and performing arts teacher on special assignment in Santa Rosa City Schools. In addition to his new job, Erik purchased a house and welcomed a baby to his family.

PAT PEFFLEY EdD '08 matriculated in the National Defense University (NDU) College of Information and Cyberspace master's program in cyberspace and expects to graduate in June. Pat was also selected to the NDU American Fellows Class of 2022.

ALEXIS RAMPAL ME '08 is a content strategist at Forage, a Series B edtech startup providing free, self-paced, on-demand virtual work experience programs provided by Fortune 500 companies globally.

JEFF TENG ME '08 is an associate director at the USC Marshall School of Business, where he manages a team providing academic advising services to undergraduate students.

JONATHON HYDE EdD '09 is dean of students at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Ore.

JULIENNE JOSE-CHEN ME '09, EdD '21 is the assistant dean for student services at UCLA Fielding School of Public Health.

BREANNA LANDWEHR ME '09 is working with Work Window, the first virtual reality career-exploration app available in the Oculus Quest 2.

NORMAN SAUCE EdD '09 is executive director of student support services for the Griffin-Spalding County School System in Griffin, Ga.

2010s

LAURA CASTAÑEDA BA '85, EdD '10, a professor of professional practice at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, has been named the school's associate dean for diversity, inclusion, equity and access.

CHARLES FLORES EdD '10 had an article, “Social Justice Leadership as Inclusion: Promoting Inclusive Practices to Ensure Equity for All,” published in *Educational Leadership and Administration: Teaching and Program Development*; Special Edition, Vol. 1, July 2021: Justice Centered Leadership.

ANNA HUERTA BA '09, ME '10 is a senior game design director for Electronic Arts/Maxis in Austin, Texas.

DOREEN PETERSON MAT '10 was named Teacher of the Year by the staff at Granada Middle School in Whittier, Calif.



All Are Welcome: The San Diego Community College District Celebrates a New Chancellor

Values of diversity, equity and inclusion have motivated USC Rossier graduate Carlos O. Cortez PhD '06 throughout his career as an educator and administrator

ON TUESDAY, MAY 31, AT 4:30 P.M., SAN DIEGO'S PETCO Park, home of the San Diego Padres, will host a different kind of gathering: the investiture of Carlos O. Cortez PhD '06 as chancellor of the San Diego Community College District (SDCCD). "Most investitures are closed-door, power broker events," notes Cortez, a graduate of USC Rossier's program in education policy and administration. "This one is a popcorn and hot dog sort of affair, free and open to the public." In recognition of Cortez's careerlong commitment to social justice, the celebration is billed as "a home run for diversity and inclusion."

Cortez, nationally recognized as an educational leader, is the first chancellor of a California community college to identify as both queer and binary.

Finding enduring inspiration in the work of Alice Walker, Cortez invited the acclaimed writer and activist to be keynote speaker for his investiture celebration. He first read Walker's novel *The Color Purple* as a teenager. "It opened my eyes to omissions of historical truth—such as the suppressed history

of lynching in America—that I encountered in high school and later as a history major in college," he says.

Walker's work reflects the exploration that motivated Cortez throughout his education and career. His degrees—a bachelor's from Georgetown University, a master's from New York University, and a PhD in education policy and administration from USC Rossier—focus on African American feminist political history.

At USC Rossier, his doctoral dissertation examined how African American female educators instigated political reform in the Los Angeles area at the height of the Black Power Movement. He interviewed notable educator-activists, such as U.S. Rep. Diane Watson, activist-academic Angela Davis, Los Angeles Unified School District board member Marguerite LaMotte, and many other progressive change agents who began their careers as teachers. The research deepened his understanding of how educators can shape policy. "I came into the field because I wanted to change institutions and the policies that ultimately have consequences on the most vulnerable members of society," he says.

Throughout his career, Cortez chose to work primarily with ethnically diverse underserved student populations from low-income communities. He began his career in the Teach for America corps, served as director of education extension at UCLA, and was acting vice president of instruction at Berkeley City College. Starting in 2015, Cortez was president of the San Diego College of Continuing Education. Since becoming chancellor and chief executive officer of the SDCCD in July 2021, he now oversees 100,000 students on 10 campuses: San Diego City, Mesa and Miramar colleges, and the San Diego College of Continuing Education's seven sites.

Cortez takes the lead on all operations in a district that is the largest provider of workforce training and education in the region, with a \$780 million annual budget. Projects now underway include four-year baccalaureate programs offering leading-edge professional training, and expanding equity and access in a district where a growing number of students contend with hunger and housing insecurities.

In the spirit of the educator-activists of his USC Rossier thesis, Cortez partners with legislators to write and support bills that promote the welfare of the SDCCD and its stakeholders. AB 1719, introduced in the California State Assembly in January, expands on provisions of previous legislation to allow community college and K-12 school districts to construct affordable housing for students, faculty, staff, and current and former foster youth on their property.

At his investiture, the theme of Cortez's speech will be the role of community colleges in combating poverty. "I believe that it's better for marginalized and vulnerable populations to link arms rather than be positioned against one another," he says. "We need to embrace the rich complexity of human beings, many of whom are multiracial and multiethnic and have new conceptions of gender and sexuality, not binary or simplistic terms of gender and race. This is the opportunity that lies ahead." —R

Story:
Margaret Crane

ALUMNI NEWS



GREG SCHULZ EdD '06 NAMED PRESIDENT OF CITRUS COLLEGE

Greg Schulz EdD '06 has been selected to serve as the eighth superintendent/president of Citrus College. With more than 21 years of leadership experience in the California Community Colleges System, Greg is known for being an enthusiastic and student-centered administrator. He previously served as the president of Fullerton College since 2016.

Greg has also served in a variety of other educational leadership roles, including provost of North Orange Continuing Education (NOCE); dean of trades and industrial technologies at Long Beach City College; dean of instruction and student services of NOCE; interim director of fiscal affairs at North Orange County Community College District (NOCCCD); manager of administrative services at NOCE; and adjunct associate professor at California State University, Fullerton.

As superintendent/president, Greg will be responsible for providing leadership and advocacy; serving as the educational leader; maintaining community, legislative and college relations; overseeing planning processes; and ensuring the fiscal integrity of the institution. As the chief executive officer of the district, he will supervise all college operations and report to the board of trustees. —R

MELISSA GILLESPIE ME '11 and Carlton Gillespie welcomed daughter Sienna Joy Gillespie on May 4, 2021, in Los Angeles.

EVA HINOJOZA ME '11, EdD '17 and husband Manuel Valencia welcomed their first child, Dylan Jose Valencia, on Nov. 3, 2020.

WENLI JEN EdD '11 was elected as the national compliance officer for Chinese American Citizens Alliance, the nation's longest-serving Asian American civil rights organization.

NORFINA JOVES MAT '11 is an associate director for the College Board in Austin, Texas.

EMILY REYES MAT '11 is a third grade teacher at Laurel Cinematic Arts & Creative Technologies Magnet School in Los Angeles. Emily also serves as chapter vice chair for United Teachers Los Angeles and executive vice president for the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, Los Angeles chapter.

KRISTINA RIGDEN MAT '11, EdD '17 joined California State University, Fullerton, as a research development officer in the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects.

BRUCE ABNEY MAT '12 is a three-time Teacher of the Year honoree.

PIERRE CAMPBELL ME '12 is assistant director for North Campus, a residential area for 5,500 students at the University of Maryland, College Park.

LEONEL DIAZ JR. ME '12 completed a PhD in organization, information and learning sciences from the University of New Mexico. In addition, Leonel began a new role as the assistant director of the MOSAIC Multicultural Center at the State University of New York, Delhi.

MARK GOMEZ EdD '12 was promoted to principal at Diamond Ranch High School in Pomona Unified School District after previously serving as assistant principal at the same school.

MATTHEW JELICK MAT '12, who serves with the U.S. State Department's English Language Fellow Program, has been working in partnership with U.S. consulates in China, hosting teacher-development programs throughout the country.

BRIANA LAMBERSON MAT '12 is a ninth grade English teacher in Clark County School District in Las Vegas, Nev.

DEVERY RODGERS EdD '12 is an assistant professor at California State University, Long Beach, where she teaches a wide range of courses in educational administration and educational leadership.

ELIZABETH TORRES MAT '12 was selected by the mayor of Denver to serve on the Energy Committee for the City and County of Denver's Sustainability Advisory Council.

ALINA VARONA ME '12, dean for workforce development and career education at the College of Marin, won a 2021 Women in Business Award from the *North Bay Business Journal*.

ROCÍO HERNÁNDEZ EdD '13 earned tenure as counselor faculty at Ventura College last spring.

SHEILA SCHNEIDER MAT '13 started a job teaching at Green Technology Charter High School in Albany, N.Y., an all-boys school that is predominantly African American. Sheila teaches 10th grade global history and 12th grade psychology.

LEENA BAKSHI EdD '14 founded STEM4Real, a professional learning nonprofit dedicated to equity and social justice in math and science education.

VIET BUI ME '14, EdD '20 was promoted to associate director of student affairs at the USC Thornton School of Music.

DIEUWERTJE KAST BS '11, MAT '14, EdD '20 was presented with the Social Impact Abie Award at AnitaB.org's 2021 Grace Hopper Celebration. Dieuwertje and her husband, Roe Fung, also welcomed their son, Grayson, on Aug. 3, 2021.

ARTURO PEREZ MAT '14 is a history teacher at the Harker School in San Jose, Calif.

JOSEPH RIOS EdD '14 joined the nonprofit organization Community Work Services as a job-readiness instructor, responsible for developing workforce-development curricula for persons with barriers to employment, and for creating quality-assurance processes.

ELIZABETH TRAYNER EdD '14 was recognized with University of the Pacific's 2021 Woman of Distinction Award. Elizabeth is Pacific's Title IX coordinator.

ALUMNI NEWS

ACACIA WARREN EdD '14 founded RRISE UP with Kelley Le, director of the University of California, Irvine's Science Project. RRISE UP (Radical Reimagination of Inclusion, Science and Education) is a nonprofit designed by BIPOC educators for educators, students and educational leaders.

TESS WHITE MAT-TESOL '14 is an ESL teacher at the adult school in Clovis Unified School District.

STELLA YUEN ME '14 is a university programs lead for the Clorox Co. in the Bay Area.

ASHLEY BROWN ME '15 is an education policy analyst in the San Francisco Unified School District. As a team member of the African American Achievement and Leadership Initiative (AAALI) in the superintendent's office, Ashley manages the AAALI Advance Program, which coordinates support for Black high school students to increase on-time graduation, college eligibility collaboration and matriculation.

TRISHA CALLELLA EdD '15 is a principal researcher at LEANLAB Education, a nonprofit organization based in Kansas City, Mo.

NANCY DAYNE EdD '15 was hired in 2015 as an assistant professor at California State University, Long Beach, in the area of child development and family studies. This fall, she received tenure and was promoted to associate professor.

SHANA DEVLIEGER MAT '15 will complete her PhD in applied developmental psychology from the University of Pittsburgh School of Education.

KĒHAULANI ENOS EdD '15 is a strategy consultant for the 'Ōiwi Leadership Institute at Kamehameha Schools in Honolulu, Hawai'i.

STEVEN LORICK EdD '15 was appointed global golf performance ambassador and national key accounts for golf at Technogym.

JAMES MCKENNA EdD '15 is the assistant director of professional learning and leadership development for the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE).

'ALOHI LANI OKAMURA EdD '15 received the Southwest Conference on Language Teaching, Excellence in Teaching Award—Post Secondary. 'Alohilani is an adjunct professor at the Institute for Teacher Education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

SETH PICKENS EdD '15 is a project designer at Economic Roundtable, where he provides visionary and strategic leadership for the Realization Project, a research demonstration of the Economic Roundtable.

CANDACE RYPISI EdD '15 has been promoted to assistant vice provost and director of student-faculty programs at California Institute of Technology.

JANET SCHMIDT ME '15 and Russell Schmidt MS '19 welcomed Eli Schmidt on Sept. 29.

EDGAR BARRON EdD '16 started an organizational and leadership consulting agency, Dr. Ed Barron Consulting, after 11 years in higher education.

TRISTA BEARD EdD '16 had a research paper published in the *Journal of First-generation Student Success*, titled "Emerging Social Capital in the Lives of Latinx First-Generation College Students: The Case for 'Apprentice Agents' in a Social Capital Framework."

MICHAEL GORSE ME '16 joined Teach For America and has been working toward a preliminary credential in single-subject mathematics.

OSCAR LUGO MAT '16 moved into the position of instructional lead after two years as acting English department head at Fusion Academy Los Angeles.

CRECHENA WISE EdD '16 is director of secondary schools at ABC Unified School District in Cerritos, Calif.

IRIS AGRAFIOTIS MAT '17 is an English teacher at Girls Academic Leadership Academy in Los Angeles, where she teaches sixth grade creative writing, seventh grade English, 11th grade English, and middle school and high school yearbook.

EVERARDO CARVAJAL EdD '17 is director of correctional education, data and school accountability at New Opportunities Organization.

JOHN REYES EdD '17 is director of research, program evaluation and innovation for the Roche Center for Catholic Education at Boston College.

JANDERIE RIVERA MAT-TESOL '17 earned her EdD in organizational leadership from Nova Southeastern University.



NICKEY WOODS EdD '15 APPOINTED DEAN OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION AT USC GOULD SCHOOL OF LAW

Nickey Woods EdD '15, was recently appointed the inaugural dean of diversity, equity and inclusion at the USC Gould School of Law. She is responsible for leading Gould's diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging efforts. This involves three key areas: 1) knowledge and skill development, 2) community, culture, and climate, and 3) assessment, planning, and evaluation. Nickey is the faculty advisor for the Student Bar Association and co-chairs Gould's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism Committee. Nickey is also the co-chair of legislative monitoring for the diversity section of the National Association of Law Placement (NALP) and serves as a DEI consultant for Nickelodeon/Viacom.

Nickey previously served as a director in student affairs at UCLA and as an assistant dean in UCLA's Graduate Division. A first-generation college student, she earned a bachelor's degree in psychology at UCLA, where she was an honor roll, all-conference member of the women's basketball team. She earned a master's degree in education with an emphasis in cross-cultural teaching at National University and a doctorate in educational leadership, with a concentration in educational psychology, at USC Rossier. —R

ALUMNI NEWS

HELENE SPARANGIS ME '17 is a CTEIG coordinator for the Los Angeles Unified School District–Linked Learning at Roosevelt High School.

INGRID TWYMAN EdD '17 is an independent consultant and owner of TwyLight Solutions LLC in Long Beach, Calif. She consults as a school-improvement coach with Long Beach Unified School District, where the American Institutes for Research has partnered with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to create a Network for School Improvement.

HUGO YEPEZ ME '17 is director of strategic plan evaluation and assessment–diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice at UMass Global.

STEFANIE BADURIA EdD '18 was hired as a campus lead for Alpha, a private, K–8 school redefining the way kids go to school.

AMIE CARTER EdD '18 is an assistant superintendent in the Marin County Office of Education in San Rafael, Calif.

TARA HARCOURT MAT '18 is a mathematics teacher at California High School in Whittier Union High School District. She teaches algebra 1, algebra 2 and geometry and is in her fourth year of teaching.

BRENDA LOPEZ EdD '18 is the chief external officer for Magnolia Public Schools in Los Angeles.

FANISHA MUEPO EdD '18 is a HEET (humanizing equitable education for transformation) equity coach at Bret Harte Middle School in Los

Angeles. HEET equity coach is a new position within LAUSD Local District West that supports Black student achievement.

MIGUEL SOLIS EdD '18 was named head of school at Maui Preparatory Academy, an independent school in Napili, Hawai'i, serving preschool–12th grade.

MARINA THEODOTOU EdD '18 is the director of learning experiences for the Department of Defense in Alexandria, Va. She completed a six-month rotation from Defense Acquisition University to NavalX, the innovation cell of the U.S. Navy, where she developed learning experiences on digital readiness, innovation leadership and adaptive acquisition for sailors and Marines.

NINA THOMAS EdD '18 was named Rehabilitative Professional of the Year by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

JONATHAN TOWNSEND EdD '18 is director of faculty development at California University of Science and Medicine in Colton.

ADRIANA ALCANTARA ME '19 is a school counselor in the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District.

CAMILLE EDWARDS ME '19 is an executive assistant to the co-executive producer and supervising producer for *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* in New York City.

BROOKE FLORES MAT '19 is a middle school social studies teacher at Lifeline Education Charter School in Compton, Calif.

MARK MATHEWS EdD '19 is a new adjunct professor in the security management graduate program at the University of Houston–Downtown.

ALONDRA MORALES ME '19 is the assistant director for the Global Executive EdD program at USC Rossier.

SUNTERRAH PALMER ME '19 is a supervisor, outreach and communications, for UCLA Financial Aid and Scholarships.

RICHARD PEDROZA EdD '19 is an adjunct professor at USC Rossier, teaching in the Master of Arts in Teaching program. Richard is also an education specialist supervisor.

LESLEY RUZON BA '96, MAT '19 is a theater arts teacher in the Moreland School District in San Jose, Calif. She teaches six theater arts classes.

2020S

MARIA COZETTE AKOPIAN EdD '20 had the female leadership development program she designed in her doctoral studies adopted by the College of Professional and Global Education at California State University, Los Angeles. The program is called “Women First: Leadership and Professional Development Program” and will be offered to students as certification in spring 2022.

FIVE TROJANS NAMED SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS



CARMEN GARCIA
EdD '07
Superintendent:
Morgan Hill Unified
School District;
Morgan Hill, Calif.



KENNETH “CHRIS”
HURST EdD '11
Superintendent: West
Contra Costa Unified
School District,
Richmond, Calif.



STEVE MCLAUGHLIN
EdD '11
Superintendent:
Fullerton Joint Union
High School District,
Fullerton, Calif.



STEPHEN NELLMAN
EdD '08
Superintendent:
Centinela Valley Union
High School District,
Lawndale, Calif.



JULIE PARKS EdD '21
Superintendent:
Moraga Elementary
School District,
Moraga, Calif.

ALUMNI NEWS

JACQUELINE GONZALES ME '20 is a school counselor for Vista Hill Foundation in San Diego.

FAITH HALEY ME '20 is executive director of admissions at Indiana State University in Terre Haute, where she oversees the undergraduate admissions division.

CECILIA JEREZ MAT-TESOL '20 is an English language fellow at the U.S. Department of State.

LESHAI JOHNSON MAT '20 and her boyfriend, David, welcomed Cassandra Ahaiwe-Dixon, a beautiful baby girl, on Sept. 25.

MEGAN NICHOLSON EdD '20 is a human resources coordinator at Castello di Amorosa Winery in Calistoga, Calif.

JOSEPHINE OCHOA MAT-TESOL '20 is a program assistant at Bridge to Enter Advanced Mathematics in Los Angeles. She is the lead translator, seventh and ninth grade counselor, summer camp associate and site director.

CORTLYN RAYMOND ME '20 is the coordinator of student engagement at Pitzer College.

CORY REANO EdD '20 celebrated Mother's Day, May 9, 2021, with the birth of her first child, Liam. Cory is the director of student success and engagement at the USC School of Pharmacy.

ANNA SANTA MARIA EdD '20 is a principal in Coachella Valley Unified School District.

ALINA TENDERICH MAT '20 is a third grade teacher at Wise School in Bel Air, Calif.

SORAIRA URQUIZA EdD '20 was awarded the 2021 Emerging Leader Award from the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO).

SAMANTHA CASAÑAS ME '21 is the assistant director of academic support in the Center for Advising and Academic Success at Whittier College.

ADOLFO DIAZ MAT '21 is a fifth grade elementary school teacher in the South Pasadena Unified School District.

GREG FRANK MAT '21 is an English language development coordinator at Environmental Charter High School Gardena.

JEREMY GARCIA ME '21 is the sole elementary school counselor for Hollyvale Innovation Elementary School in Hesperia Unified School District.

ENRIQUE GONZALEZ MAT '21 is a full-time teacher at St. Mary's College High School, a private Catholic school in Berkeley, Calif., where he teaches world and Latin American history.

MICHAEL GRACE EdD '21 is the chief administrative officer/chief executive officer for the West Virginia University Health System in Morgantown.

KARINA GUTIERREZ ME '21 is a pupil services and attendance (PSA) counselor in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

BREANNA HUMMITZSCH ME '21 is a sixth grade teacher in Eastside Union School District in Lancaster, Calif.

PETER MAHARAJ EdD '21 is director of information technology services for the San Diego Community College District.

AMIT MOHINDRA EdD '21 is head of data analytics and insights, global corporate affairs at Takeda Pharmaceuticals in Cambridge, Mass.

BRENT OBLETON EdD '21 is vice president of diversity and inclusion at Hudson Pacific Properties in Los Angeles.

LAUREN PETREA EdD '21 is the interim executive director of human resources for Aldine Independent School District in Houston.

PALOMA ROMAN ME '21 is a certified counselor in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

ALICIA ROMAN EdD '21 is senior associate dean for finance and administration at Columbia University in New York. With the founding dean and co-founding deans, she is tasked with building out the newly formed Columbia Climate School.

ALICIA ROMAN ME '21 is an academic adviser for the Community College of Denver.

JEANETTE SANCHEZ ME '21 is a school counselor in Long Beach Unified School District.

CHERRE STONEHAM MAT '21 is a third-grade teacher at Learning By Design Charter School in Los Angeles.

HARLEY YOUNG MAT '21 is a lead teacher, sports medicine and anatomy, and physiology for iLEAD Online.

IN MEMORIAM

REYNALDO (REY) BACA, retired professor of clinical education and research Reynaldo (Rey) Baca, who served at USC Rossier from 1994 to 2017, passed away on Dec. 21, 2021. During his time at USC, he was co-director of the Center for Multilingual, Multicultural Research, where he oversaw the direction of the USC Latino and Language Minority Teacher Project. He was also a faculty affiliate with the USC Dornsife Equity Research Institute. In addition, he served as president of the Sociology of Education Association, was on the editorial board of *Teacher Education Quarterly*, and served as a consultant on language minority teacher education to the U.S. Department of Education.

AUDREY J. SCHWARTZ, professor emerita Audrey James Schwartz, the first woman to achieve tenure at USC Rossier and a frequently published sociologist, passed away on Jan. 28, 2022, in her home. She was 93. Audrey published several books and research papers examining the public policy choices that could improve education systems, including a collaboration with her late husband and former UCLA Dean of Law, Murray L. Schwartz. She also founded the Sociology of Education Association in 1973. Audrey was a frequent patron of theater and opera and maintained a keen interest in design and architecture. She is survived by her three children (Deborah, Jonathan and Daniel), five grandchildren (Samantha, Benjamin, Elizabeth, Leana and Rebecca) and one great-grandchild (Alexander). In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in her memory to the United Way of Greater Los Angeles.



A Lasting Legacy

Mary Helen Immordino-Yang named Fahmy Attallah Chair in Humanistic Psychology

By Elaine Woo

DR. FAHMY ATTALLAH ME '56 AND Donna Ford met at the start of the 1962 school year, when he was the psychologist for the Cypress School District and she was a brand-new kindergarten teacher. “He was sitting behind me, trying to find out my name,” Donna recalled recently. “He said, ‘That’s the girl I’m going to marry.’”

Nine months later, when his prophecy became reality, the couple began the journey—and a 42-year-long marriage—that would leave its mark on USC: the Fahmy Attallah Chair in Humanistic Psychology at USC Rossier School of Education.

Their \$2 million gift, in 1997, reflected the couple’s deep commitment to their professions: Fahmy, who earned a bachelor’s in psychology in 1955 and a master’s in education in 1956 at USC, worked for school districts in Los Angeles and Orange counties for two decades before devoting himself to private practice for an additional 10 years. He died in 2005 at 96. Donna taught kindergarten and first grade in the Cypress district for 40 years until her retirement in 2001.

The Attallah chair was first held by

Donald E. Polkinghorne, a professor of counseling psychology who retained it until his 2005 retirement. It was not filled again until the appointment this year of USC Rossier Professor Mary Helen Immordino-Yang, a former middle school teacher who has gained international prominence through her work on the neural and psychological factors that support effective learning and teaching.

Immordino-Yang said she hopes the Attallah gift will enable her to more quickly advance the work of the USC Center for Affective Neuroscience, Development, Learning and Education, which she directs.

“Fahmy and Donna’s dedication to children and their communities, and their lifetimes of hard work on behalf of young people, are inspirational,” Immordino-Yang said. “Fahmy said it beautifully in a poem: ‘Deep down within us is a mine of potentiality’s treasures.’ Though I couldn’t have said it as well, I share this belief.”

Immordino-Yang “reminds me very much of how my husband would be with people—so upbeat, happy, outgoing,” Donna Ford Attallah said

after meeting her last year. “I felt his message was in good hands.”

Born in Cairo in 1909, Fahmy Attallah planned to study medicine, but then his father died. To support his family, he worked as an assistant to the Egyptian secretary of commerce.

He found fulfillment in pursuits outside work, including reading philosophy and writing poetry, but was most passionate about swimming. His talent and drive led to seven attempts to swim across the English Channel and earned him a place as an alternate on Egypt’s swim team at the 1948 London Olympics.

After studying at Cairo University and the University of Reading in Oxford, England, Fahmy earned a scholarship to USC, arriving in Los Angeles in 1951 with \$16 in his pocket. His frugal nature and savvy business sense eventually improved his fortunes.

Before marrying Donna, Fahmy suggested that they either honeymoon in Germany or make a down payment on an oceanfront apartment building for sale in Long Beach. “I said, ‘No problem. That’s a place where we can live,’” Donna recalled. “He put down everything in his savings but \$5.”

Their investments multiplied over the decades, earning the couple enough to pledge substantial support not only to USC but also to the Coptic Church and Chapman University, where Donna earned a bachelor’s in education in 1961. Donna, who was born in San Bernardino, came from a family of educators. Her generosity to Chapman is evident in the 2017 naming of the Donna Ford Attallah College of Educational Studies as well as an arts and humanities library named for her and her late husband.

“He wasn’t into material things,” said Stuart Gothold EdD ’74, USC Rossier emeritus clinical professor of education and Fahmy’s boss when he was superintendent of the South Whittier School District in the 1970s. “He was concerned about the welfare of others. He wanted to do something that would be around when he no longer was.” —R

Donna Ford Attallah at her home in Long Beach, Calif.

PHOTO BY REBECCA ARANDA

Help Us Strengthen the Broken Teacher Pipeline

Underpayment, high costs of living, rising student debt and the pandemic have pushed the teacher shortage to a crisis level.

Through USC Rossier's newly launched Teacher Preparation Residency, we're recruiting the best and brightest Master of Arts in Teaching students and positioning them for long-term success.



ILLUSTRATION BY EDMON DE HARO

📶 Join the USC Rossier community in supporting the next generation of teachers by going to rossier.usc.edu/giving. Select "Make a Gift" and then "Teacher Residency Fund." To learn more about the teacher shortage and the new residency program see p. 14.

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Students in the Crenshaw Family YMCA's after-school program participate in a yoga class in February 2022. To learn about the work of Veda Ramsay-Stamp MPA '18, Global EdD student and executive director of the Crenshaw YMCA, see p. 24.

PHOTO BY REBECCA ARANDA



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