



NASPA[®]

Student Affairs Administrators
in Higher Education

2016-2017 Emerging Faculty Leader Academy Cohort

Jaleh Dashti-Gibson

Professor of Practice and Director of
Professional Preparation, Higher
Education Program
Merrimack College

Michael Funk

Clinical Assistant Professor and
Coordinator of the MA Higher Education
and Students Affairs Program
New York University

Cristobal Salinas Jr.

Assistant Professor
Florida Atlantic University

Dena Kniess

Assistant Professor
Eastern Illinois University

Laura Sponsler

Clinical Assistant Professor
University of Denver

Thai-Huy Nguyen

Assistant Professor of Student
Development Administration
Seattle University

Erin Kahunawai Wright

Assistant Professor
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa



Alejandro Covarrubias
Assistant Professor
University of San Francisco

Alejandro Covarrubias, Ed. D., is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Leadership Studies at the University of San Francisco where he teaches in both the Higher Education and Student Affairs M.A. program and the Organization and Leadership M.A. and Ed.D. programs. He earned a doctorate in International and Multicultural Education with an emphasis in Human Rights Education at the University of San Francisco. His research agenda focuses on the experiences of men of color and student affairs leadership at the intersections of privileged and marginalized identities through the lenses of Critical Race Theory and Intersectional Feminism.

Alejandro worked for ten years as a student affairs practitioner in the areas of Housing and Residence Life and Multicultural Affairs. He is a proud product of over a decade of Jesuit education, both as a scholar and as a professional. He is Next Generation Faculty for the Social Justice Training Institute (SJTI.org); and has eight years of experience as a social justice and equity consultant and trainer in higher education (CovarrubiasConsulting.com). He is dedicated to challenging himself and others to think more critically about social justice and identity issues holistically from the head, the heart and the body.



Raul Fernandez
Lecturer
Boston University
@raulspeaks

Dr. Raul Fernandez is a lecturer in the Higher Education Administration program and the director of the online Ed.M. program at the Boston University School of Education. He is a well-recognized leader and accomplished speaker on issues of diversity and inclusion, with hundreds of faculty, staff and students at dozens of campuses and conferences having attended his workshops.

He is a representative of NASPA's Equity, Inclusion & Social Justice Division and was recently accepted to NASPA's SERVE Academy and ASHE's National Early Career Faculty Workshop. He is also a local elected official, serving as a Town Meeting Member for Brookline's 9th Precinct. More at: www.raulspeaks.com.



Amy French
Assistant Professor
Indiana State University

Dr. French is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at Indiana State University. She is the Program Coordinator of the Student Affairs and Higher Education master's program. She has presented at the state, regional, national and international levels and is actively involved in NASPA and ACPA. She currently serves NASPA IV-E as the Faculty Council representative.

Her research interests include social justice issues related to race, identity, disability, and institutional identity. Dr. French's teaching areas include student development theory, administrative leadership, and program evaluation. She approaches the field of student affairs with a scholar-practitioner lens and believes in the importance of creating a space where all voices are invited, respected, and represented at the table.

Dr. French holds a Ph.D. in Higher Education Leadership from Indiana State University, a Master of Arts from Loyola University Chicago, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Kentucky Wesleyan College.



David Nguyen
Assistant Professor
Ohio University
@DaveNguyen191

Dave Nguyen is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education and Student Affairs at Ohio University. His research utilizes theoretical insights from behavioral economics, sociology, and psychology to examine access and equity issues in postsecondary education. Dave's research explores how financial issues shape the experiences of students and ecological influences on graduate school aspirations.

Dr. Nguyen completed his doctorate at Michigan State University's Higher, Adult & Lifelong Education program. He holds a master's degrees in Accounting from Syracuse University and in College Student Development and Counseling from Northeastern University. He completed his undergraduate degree in Accounting and Marketing at Syracuse University



David Hoa Nguyen
Assistant Professor
The University of Texas at San Antonio
@higheredlawprof

Dr. David H. K. Nguyen is an assistant professor of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies at The University of Texas at San Antonio. He teaches courses on higher education law and policy, administration and finance, and the profession of higher education and student affairs, generally. Dr. Nguyen's research focuses on the intersection of law and policy with higher education to examine the policies and practices that address inequities of access of education for underrepresented students. Dr. Nguyen also studies the globalization and internationalization of higher education, with specific emphasis on the international student experience on host campuses.

Dr. Nguyen has a B.S. Ed. in secondary education, MBA, JD, PhD in Education Policy Studies, all from Indiana University. Dr. Nguyen also has a Master of Advanced Legal Studies (LLM Adv) from Leiden University in the Netherlands while he was a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar. He is admitted to the bars of the states of Indiana and North Dakota.



Blanca Vega
Assistant Professor
Montclair State University
@blancavnyc

A native New Yorker, Dr. Blanca E. Vega is the daughter of Ecuadorian immigrants. Dr. Vega is Assistant Professor of Higher Education at Montclair State University. She earned a doctorate (Ed.D) from the Higher and Postsecondary Education program at Teachers College, Columbia University. During that time, she also worked as Director of the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) at Marymount Manhattan College. Dr. Vega earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology from Brandeis University and a Master of Arts degree in Higher Education at New York University.

Dr. Vega's scholarship broadly focuses on equity, access, and success in higher education among underserved populations. Her primary area of research situates racism as one of multiple barriers that can impact higher education experiences and success – not just for students, but also for administrators and faculty. She is currently studying perceptions of racial incidents in higher education, responses to these incidents, and organizational learning that occurs after racial incidents occur. Her secondary area of research explores leadership and policymaking and their impact on access to and support for undocumented students. In this line of inquiry, Dr. Vega examines leadership concerning undocumented students in an increasingly anti-immigrant political environment and how this might affect other leadership decisions for historically oppressed groups in higher education. Finally, Dr. Vega continues to explore Latinx intellectualism in higher education curriculum, instruction, and the professoriate.



Rachel Wagner
Assistant Professor
Clemson University
@rachellwag

Rachel Wagner, EdD, is an Assistant Professor in Higher Education and Student Affairs in the department of Educational and Organizational Leadership at Clemson University. The goal of her research is to understand how post-secondary environments can support human flourishing. Specifically, her scholarship centers critical and emancipatory perspectives of equity and social justice in higher education through two primary areas of inquiry: (1) gender aware and expansive practice in higher education, and (2) social justice approaches to student affairs practice. Rachel co-chaired the Knowledge Community on Men and Masculinities for the National Association for Student Personnel Administrators from 2006-2009. She received the Harry Cannon Outstanding Professional Award (2014) and the Outstanding Research Award (2015) from ACPA's Coalition on Men and Masculinities, and she recently completed a two year term as the coalition's Emerging Scholar-in-Residence. Rachel has published on the intersection of gender and disability, gender inclusive housing practices, and men's experiences in diversity education.