

## **EDUCATION**

Iowa State University, Ames, IA

**Doctor of Philosophy**, Higher Education Administration

**Certificates:** *Community College Teaching, Education for Social Justice, and Applied Research in Human Sciences*

Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI

**Master of Arts**, Educational Policy and Leadership

**Specialization:** *Educational Policy and Foundations with emphasis on Student Affairs and Higher Education*

University of Wisconsin – Madison, Madison, WI

**Bachelor of Science**, Double Major,

Community and Non-Profit Leadership, Gender and Women's Studies

**Academic Certificates/Minors:** *Chican@ and Latin@ Studies, Educational Policy Studies, LGBTQ Studies, Education and Educational Studies, Leadership*

## **ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS**

**Research Faculty – Education and Employment Research Center**

*Rutgers University* (November 2021 – Present)

In this role, I lead strategic initiatives and program management to advance educational equity and foster opportunities for underrepresented populations in STEM. Key responsibilities include:

- **Strategic Program Development:** Spearhead strategic planning and execution for the NSF Community College S-STEM Network (CCSN), designing initiatives that align with institutional goals and promote access and success for diverse student populations. Lead the development and execution of comprehensive network-building strategies and research initiatives, fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders (e.g. community colleges, four-year universities, and evaluation organizations).
- **Program Management and Oversight:** Direct the implementation of key program components, including leadership groups, grant proposal workshops, and research-to-practice clinics, ensuring equitable access, measurable outcomes, and adherence to best practices.
- **Research and Data-informed Decision-Making:** Lead longitudinal research projects, including systematic literature reviews and multi-case data analyses, to identify barriers and opportunities for community college students' pathways to technical careers, translating findings into actionable strategies.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Build and sustain collaborative partnerships with educational institutions, community organizations, and key stakeholders to enhance program impact, foster knowledge-sharing, and promote student success.
- **Leadership in Equity-Focused Initiatives:** Advocate for equitable practices by developing resources and frameworks that address systemic challenges and advance educational outcomes for underrepresented students.

**Post-Doctoral Fellow – Community College HigherEd Access Leadership Equity Scholarship (CCHALES)**

*San Diego State University (August 2023 - Present)*

In this role, I drive strategic initiatives aimed at advancing racial equity across 17 California community college campuses through the Student Equity Plan Institute (SEPI). Key contributions include:

- **Equity-Sentered Program Leadership:** Spearhead two major inquiry projects focused on advancing racial equity by assessing institutional practices and recommending strategies for systemic transformation.
- **Strategic Evaluation and Analysis:** Conduct an in-depth investigation into the origins, evolution, and impact of SEPI, delivering actionable insights that shape the future direction of equity-focused programs.
- **Program Implementation Assessment:** Lead qualitative analyses of interview data to evaluate SEPI's implementation, identifying opportunities to enhance program effectiveness and ensuring sustainable, equity-driven outcomes.
- **Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration:** Partnered with 17 community college campus leadership groups and stakeholders to foster dialogue, build capacity, and amplify the collective impact of equity initiatives across institutions.
- **Advancing Institutional Change:** Develop and apply strategic frameworks that empower colleges to address systemic barriers, ensuring meaningful and measurable progress toward racial equity and student success.

## **EDUCATION & NONPROFIT EXPERIENCE**

**August 2022 - Research Analyst – Center for the Transformation of Schools**

**Present** *University of California, Los Angeles (August 2022 – Present)*

YPAR project: Led a comprehensive study aimed at understanding the nuanced lived experiences of youth who have been in foster care.

- Spearheaded all aspects of the project, including data collection, analysis, and dissemination.
- Currently in the final stages of developing a report to communicate findings and recommendations.

CSU project: Co-led an impactful investigation into the support systems provided by foster care professionals for youth who have experienced foster care.

- Conducted interviews, meticulously coded data, and presented findings at conferences.
- Successfully disseminated project insights through a webinar presentation and ongoing manuscript development for publication.

**August 2023- Director of Alumnae Relations**

**August 2024** *National Board Directors of Corazones Unidos Siempre,*

*Chi Upsilon Sigma National Latin Sorority*

- Fostered strong connections among alumnae through strategic communication and engagement initiatives, enhancing community and support within the sorority.
- Oversaw and collaborated with a team of 20 to conduct basic operational activities.
- Developed and implemented programs and events aimed at increasing alumnae participation and networking opportunities, strengthening the sorority's impact.

- Collaborated with national leadership to create and disseminate resources that promote professional development and mentorship among alumnae members.
- Analyzed feedback from alumnae to continuously improve programming and address their needs and interests effectively.
- Served as a liaison between current members and alumnae, facilitating communication and fostering a sense of belonging across generations.

**Summer 2022 Residential Mentor University of Wisconsin-Madison – PEOPLE Program**

- Lived in mentor to support and guide 30 high school students in the summer program by providing and allocating resources for the student to navigate their experience as a college student living in a dorm
- Collaborated with MGC and NPHC organization to host a Meet the Greeks

**2020-2021 Latinas/Latinos Al Exito Content Expert Evaluator**

The Latinx Project: Conducted an in-depth study on the trends of the Latinx population in Iowa, focusing on Latinx students.

- Conducted an in-depth analysis of trends impacting the Latinx population in Iowa, with a specific focus on the academic experiences and outcomes of Latinx students.
- Performed an extensive literature review of current research related to Latinx students in Iowa, synthesizing findings to inform program development and policy recommendations.
- Collaborated with stakeholders to identify key challenges faced by Latinx students and develop strategies for improving access to educational resources and support.
- Provided expert insights and recommendations based on research findings to enhance the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at promoting Latinx student success.
- Presented findings to community partners and educational institutions to raise awareness and foster discussions on the needs of the Latinx student population.

**August 2018- May 2020 Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Program Mentor  
Iowa State University – Graduate College**

- Mentored an undergraduate student throughout their McNair experience, offering personalized guidance and resources to facilitate their preparation for the graduate school application process.
- Provided comprehensive feedback on personal statements, ensuring clarity, coherence, and alignment with the student's academic and professional goals.
- Developed structured organizational strategies to help the student effectively manage application deadlines and requirements, enhancing their overall preparedness.
- Fostered a supportive mentoring relationship that encouraged the student to explore research opportunities and develop skills essential for success in graduate studies.
- Collaborated with faculty and program staff to enhance the McNair program's resources, contributing to a holistic support system for aspiring graduate students.

**August 2017- August 2018 Fraternity and Sorority Advisor  
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee – Student**

- Advised the six Multicultural Greek Council Organization (LAU, SLG, CST, ZSC, LTPhi) by developing leadership skills, resources to implement programming, and recruitment for success.
- Supported two new entities in expanding to University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee (Sigma Lambda Gamma and Chi Sigma Tau)
- Facilitated and provided support in programming such as the Fraternity and Sorority Community Retreat, recruitment events, grant writing, Fall Welcome for MGC, IFC, NPHC, and PHA, facilitated monthly president meetings, one-on-one meetings, group meetings, and community study sessions
- Researched and conducted three assessment and evaluations for fraternity and sorority members to be successful members academically and as organizations in the surrounding community
- Restructured and mentored the executive board members to recruit and induct a new 14- member class

**Summer 2017 Office of Intercultural Engagement Advisor**

**Marquette University - Office of Intercultural Engagement**

- Planned, developed, and conducted programming for Fall 2017 for both the Center of Intercultural Engagement and the LGBTQ+ Resource Center that included Latinx Heritage Month, LGBTQ+ History Month, and Welcome Receptions
- Created, planned, and hosted the first annual Somos Latinx Student Identity Conference
- Created a potential project assistant training manual and orientation events on behalf of the Office of Intercultural Engagement

**Summer 2016 EOP McNair Coordinator**

**Marquette University**

- Planned, developed, and conducted programming for the McNair Summer Experience
- Scheduled, Advised, and met with Summer 2016 Cohort members to plan their application process
- Coordinated the Chicago Cohort 2016 Graduate school visit with three different institutions.

**August 2011- May 2016 Juventud Youth Program Leader 6-8th Grade After School Program Coordinator**

*Centro Hispano of Dane County – James Wright Middle School Madison, WI*

- Developed and implemented engaging after-school programming for 6th to 8th-grade students, focusing on academic support, leadership skills, and cultural enrichment.
- Fostered a positive and inclusive environment, promoting youth engagement and participation through interactive activities and workshops.
- Collaborated with educators, parents, and community organizations to ensure program alignment with student needs and local resources.

**TEACHING & TUTORING EXPERIENCES**

**Guest Lecture**

**March 2025** Bringing Ourselves into the Work, Part 2: "Trauma, Burnout, and Compassion Fatigue, Oh My. EDCG 528: Practicum at Cal Lutheran University. Graduate Course.

**September 2024** *Introduction to Methodologies: Narrative Inquiry & Testimonios*. EDS 6943: In-depth Approaches to Qualitative Inquiry in Educational Research at the University of Oklahoma. Graduate Course.

### Graduate

**2025** Instructor on Record  
Higher Education Policy and Law (ELPS 663HE 3- credit)  
*California State University, Northridge*

**2017-2018** Teaching Apprentice  
Educational Policy and Leadership Law Course (EDPL 6800 3- credit)  
*Marquette University – Educational Policy and Leadership*

### Undergraduate

**2021-2022** Instructor of Record  
Counseling Psych 115 (CP 115 3- credits; sections 015, 016)  
*Pre-College Enrichment Opportunity Program for Learning Excellence*  
*University of Wisconsin-Madison – School of Education*

**2019-2021** Instructor of Record  
United States Latino/a Studies (USLS 211 3- credits)  
*Iowa State University – United States Latino/a Studies*

### High School

**2022** Summer Instructor – THRIVE (Year 1 and Year 2) *University of Wisconsin-Madison – Pre-College Enrichment Opportunity Program for Learning Excellence*

### Middle School School

**2011-2016** Middle School Math Support 6-8th Grade  
*Pre-College Enrichment Program for Learning Excellence – Madison, WI*

### Elementary School

**2009** Teaching Assistant Intern – *Frank Allen Elementary Madison, WI*

### CONSULTING

**2024** **Grant Writer Consultant - University of Texas Rio Grande Valley**

Center for Broadening Participation (Phase II) Grant:

- Consulted on advancing and scaling a National Science Foundation research proposal, collaborating with a core team to update and enhance existing proposal materials.
- Responsibilities included reviewing and integrating diverse project documents, incorporating feedback from external evaluations, and contributing to the development of strategic plans for phase II.

**2023-2024** **S-STEM Researcher - University of Washington**

S-STEM CCSN Project:

- Led the creation, presentation, and publication of a systematic literature review as part of the S-STEM CCSN Project.
- Applied expertise in conducting comprehensive research to produce a high-quality research paper that contributed to the project's objectives.

**2017****Co-Project Investigator** *Marquette University – Communication Studies*

Cyberbullying Project: Investigated the impact of cyberbullying on leaders within a public school system and their strategies for addressing this issue.

- Led data collection efforts and initiated the data analysis process to uncover insights into the challenges and responses of school leaders to cyberbullying within their districts.

**STUDENT AFFIARS PRESENTATIONS**

1. **Espino, M.L.**, Valmontes, L., & Felix, E.R. (2024, October). *"Instigating Change: Supporting Community Colleges in Advancing Racial Equity."* Strengthening Student Success Conference. Garden Grove, CA.
2. Gonzalez, A., **Espino M.L.**, Ortiz, N., Franco, C., Garcia, C., & Mendoza, B. (2024, April). *A Queer of Color Critique of AB 139 at California Community Colleges.* Council for the Study of Community Colleges Conference. Pittsburgh, PA
3. **Espino, M.L.**, Felix, E., Gonzalez, A., Galan, C., & Valmonte, L.. (2024, April). *Instigating Change: A Research-Practice Partnership to Advance Racial Equity.* Annual Conference for the Council for the Study of Community Colleges. Pittsburgh, PA.
4. Whitman, K., & **Espino, M. L.**, (2023, June). *Foster(ing) Youth in the California State University: Understanding the Vital Role of Campus Support Programs.* Southern California Higher Education Foster Youth Consortium. Guest Presentation. Virtual Meeting.
5. Whitman, K. L., Thompson, D., & **Espino, M. L.** (2022, October). *Shining a light on the golden state.* Blueprint Conference. Los Angeles, CA.
6. **Espino, M. L.** (2021, November). *Education beyond undergrad.* Diverse Leaders in Education. Madison, WI
7. Rodriguez, S. L., **Espino, M. L.**, Rincon B. E., (2021, March). *Resisting marginalization, dismantling oppression: The need to understand Latinx/a/o/é student identities across the STEM pipeline.* AAHHE Conference. Virtual Conference.
8. **Espino, M. L.** (2020, February). *Navigating college and Latinx studies.* Ascender: Catch the Next. Webinar. <https://youtu.be/QzISfw4YMqM>
9. Martinez-Podolsky, E. & **Espino, M. L.** (2019, October). *Supporting Undocumented Students in Higher Education.* Latinx Excellence in the Midwest Conference. Iowa City, IA.
10. Le, B. D. & **Espino, M. L.** (2019, March). *Changing the conversation: I am not a minority.* Iowa State Conference on Race and Ethnicity. Ames, IA.

**PUBLICATIONS****REFEREED JOURNAL ARTICLES**

1. Rodriguez, S.L., Fisher, M., **Espino, M.L.**, & Nielsen J.C. Engineering Identity and Religion Intertwined: How One Woman's Experiences with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Shaped Her Professional Journey. *Journal of College and Character*, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2194587X.2025.2449978>
2. **Espino, M. L.**, Ausman, M. C., Le, B. D., Rodriguez, S. L., & Koo, K. (2024). Understanding Engineering Identity Experiences for Asian American Women in Higher Education. *Studies in Engineering Education*, 5(2), 111-129. <https://doi.org/10.21061/see.152>

3. Rodriguez, S. L., **Espino, M. L.**, & Hightower, H. (2024). Building and Maintaining an Engineering Identity: How Engineering Students Navigate Community College Stigma Prior to Transfer. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2024.2368478>
4. **Espino, M. L.**, Stevens, A., Rodriguez, S. L., & Le, B. D. (2023) "Exploring how socioeconomic status and the SSTEM scholarship influence engineering identity development for community college students." *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 48(3), 175–180. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2023.2293304>
5. Garza, N. E., Rodriguez, S. L., & **Espino, M. L.** (2022). Nepantla aquí, Nepantla allá: The borderlands of identity from Mexican-origin women in STEM. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 22(2) 130–145. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15381927221130174>
6. Le, B. D, Rodriguez, S. L., & **Espino, M. L.** (2021). Family matters: An asset-based approach to how families shape STEM identity for community college students. *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 28(1), 145–154.
7. Rodriguez, S. L., **Espino, M. L.**, & Le, B. D. (2020). The influence of policy implementation in the Midwest: How a S-STEM program broadens participation and enhances engineering identity for community college students. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 29, 29
8. **Espino, M. L.**, Rodriguez, S. L., & Le, B. D. (2020). A systematic review of literature: Engineering identity and students with financial need in community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 1–12.
9. Rodriguez, S. L., Hensen, K., **Espino, M. L.** (2019). Promoting STEM identity development in community colleges and across the transfer process. *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 26(2), 11-22.

#### RESEARCH/POLICY BRIEFS & REPORTS

1. **Espino, M. L.**, Thompson, D., Whitman, K. L., Howard, T. C., Bishop, J. P. (2024). Understanding Belongingness, Support, and Perseverance: An Exploratory Study of the Educational Experiences of Foster Youth in California. Center for the Transformation of Schools, School of Education & Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles. <https://transformschoools.ucla.edu/research/understanding-belongingness-support-and-perseverance-an-exploratory-study-of-the-educationalexperiences-of-foster-youth-in-california/>
2. Corral, M.D., Bishop, J.P., Bristol, T.J., **Espino, M.L.** (2024). (rep.). *California Race, Education, and Community Healing (REACH) Network Baseline Report School Profiles*. Center for the Transformation of Schools, School of Education & Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles.
3. Peterson, E. K., Edwards, R., Van Noy, M., Scovill, S., & **Espino, M. L.** (2023). (rep.). *Exploring Student Decision Making: A Longitudinal Study of Community College Information Technology Students*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University.
4. Whitman, K.L., **Espino, M.L.**, & Thompson, D. (2023). (rep.). *Foster(ing) Youth in the California State University: Understanding the Vital Role of Campus Support Programs*. Center for the Transformation of Schools, School of Education & Information Studies, UCLA.
5. **Espino, M. L.** & Garcia C. E. (2022). Centering Culturally Based Sororities and Fraternities: Drawing From *Testimonios*. *Perspectives*.

#### HONORS & FELLOWSHIPS

- AAHHE's **2025 Edited Volume Book Award** Recipient (Contributor)
- William and Mary **2024 IGNITE - Future Faculty Development Program Participant**
- Corazones Unidos Siempre, Chi Upsilon Sigma National Latin Sorority, Incorporated **2024 Zenith Legacy Award**

- Corazones Unidos Siempre, Chi Upsilon Sigma National Latin Sorority, Incorporated **2024 Eternal Flame Award**
- The Council for the Study of Community Colleges 2023 **Graduate Student Travel Award** (\$300)
- AAHHE's **2022 Best Scholarly Paper Award** Recipient
- Corazones Unidos Siempre, Chi Upsilon Sigma National Latin Sorority, Incorporated **2021 Rising Professional of the Year**
- Frontiers In Education **2020 Best Diversity Paper award**
- Corazones Unidos Siempre, Chi Upsilon Sigma National Latin Sorority, Incorporated, **2015 Academic Award of Excellence**

## **SERVICE**

### **Leadership Positions**

- American Educational Research Association Latina/o/x Research SIG **Chair-Elect** (2025-2027)
- Council for the Study of Community Colleges **Board Member at Large** (2025-2028)
- Omega Nu Alumnae Chapter of Corazones Unidos Siempre, Chi Upsilon Sigma National Latin Sorority Incorporated **President** (August 2024 – Present)
- National Board Directors of Corazones Unidos Siempre, Chi Upsilon Sigma National Latin Sorority Incorporated **Director of Alumnae Relations** (August 2023 – July 2024)
- AERA 2024 Presidential Session Chair
- ASHE 2022, 2023, 2024 Conference Session Chair
- CSCC 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 Conference Session Chair
- Corazones Unidos Siempre, Chi Upsilon Sigma National Latin Sorority Incorporated **Area Expansion Officer Midwest** (August 2021 – August 2022)
- Omega Pi Alumnae Chapter of Corazones Unidos Siempre, Chi Upsilon Sigma National Latin Sorority Incorporated **Founding President** (July 2021 – July 2022)
- Latina/o Graduate Student Association **President** (2020 – 2021)
- Graduate Student Advisory Council **Ph.D. Representative** (2019 – 2021)
- Doctoral Learning Community **President** (2019 – 2020)
- Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis: **Associate Editor of Copyediting** (2019 – 2020)
- University of Wisconsin – Madison La Mujer Latina **Planning Committee Co-Chair** (2011 – 2016)
- UW-Milwaukee **Multicultural Greek Council Advisor**
- UW-Milwaukee **Order of Omega Advisor**
- Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Program **Graduate Student Mentor**

## **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

- Council for the Study of Community Colleges (CSCC) | Board member at large 2025-2027
- American Educational Research Association (AERA) | Latina/o/x Research SIG Chair-Elect 2025-2026
- American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE)
- Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE)
- American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE)
- NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
- Order of Omega | Delta Eta Chapter



- Corazones Unidos Siempre, Chi Upsilon Sigma National Latin Sorority Incorporated | Beta Upsilon Chapter *Founding Sister* | Omega Pi Alumnae Chapter *Founder* | Omega Nu Alumnae Chapter President
- Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program Scholar & Alumna | UW-Madison
- Center for Educational Opportunity (CeO) Scholar & Alumna | UW-Madison
- Precollege Enrichment Opportunity Program for Learning Excellence (PEOPLE) Scholar & Alumna | UW-Madison