

## Testing and Beyond | Panelist Biographies

**Kathy Booth** is a senior research associate at WestEd, where she focuses on translating research findings so that practitioners can apply them to pressing concerns and facilitating opportunities for community college leaders to develop action plans based on evidence. Her recent projects include developing the LaunchBoard, a data system that links educational, labor market, and employment outcomes data, facilitating the creation of assessment competencies for the California Community College Common Assessment Initiative, and documenting employment outcomes for skills-builders (students who engage in short-term course-taking to advance their careers). Previously, she served as the executive director of the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group), where she played a lead role in activities such as developing the Career and Technical Education Outcomes Survey, expanding research on the use of high school data to inform placement into basic skills courses, and documenting effective approaches to student support. Ms. Booth has also worked on a number of national projects including the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the Gates Foundation's Completion by Design, and developmental education initiatives for Achieving the Dream.

**Robert Bosley** is a high school mathematics teacher at the Santee Education Complex in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Mr. Bosley has ten years of experience teaching in LAUSD since earning his B.S. in Mathematics Education from the University of Central Oklahoma and his master's degree in Curriculum and Instructional Design of Mathematics from the University of Texas, Arlington. His interest in math curriculum design, instruction, and assessment led to several leadership positions including eight years as an instructional cabinet member, eight years as Math Department chair, and three years as Common Core lead. Concerned with his students' preparation for college-level mathematics, Mr. Bosley became the first pilot teacher in the South Los Angeles Math (SLAM) Project, an intersegmental co-teaching collaboration with California State University, Los Angeles, and now has three years of experience in the program.

**Phyllis Braxton** is currently serving as the interim vice president of Student Services at Los Angeles Harbor College. Prior to that, Ms. Braxton served for two years as the interim vice president of Student Services at West Los Angeles College. Ms. Braxton has been involved with matriculation and the Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) for several years, since starting with the Los Angeles Community College District in 1998 as a matriculation coordinator at Los Angeles Southwest College. She began her administrative career as an associate dean of Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOP&S) and later as a dean of matriculation and counseling at Los Angeles Pierce College. During her 11 years at Los Angeles Pierce College, she worked with faculty to create and develop curriculum to be used in the First-Year Experience Program. Later she helped to create and promote many of the college's high-profile student success efforts such as Algebra Success at Pierce (ASAP), an acceleration program, and learning communities involving both English and math. She has served on many statewide advisory committees including the statewide Matriculation Advisory Committee working on the important changes to implement the Student Success and Support Program. Currently she serves on the statewide advisory committee for the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative, working on efforts to give colleges technical assistance and professional development opportunities to help colleges implement student success initiatives. Before joining the Los Angeles Community College District, Ms. Braxton was a counselor and learning specialist at California State University, Fresno, and a staff research associate for the Center for Study and Evaluation at the University of California, Los Angeles. Ms. Braxton's first love is teaching, and she has served as an adjunct instructor teaching developmental psychology and student success courses for over 10 years. Ms. Braxton earned both her M.S. in Counseling and her B.A. in Psychology from CSU, Fresno. Currently she is working on obtaining a doctorate degree in Higher Education Leadership at California Lutheran University.

**Pamela Burdman** is an independent policy analyst on college access, readiness, and success. Her emphasis is on using insights from emerging research to help policymakers and practitioners redefine problems and devise strategies to improve student success. Her *Degrees of Freedom* series, published by LearningWorks and Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE), explores college math requirements and their role as a gatekeeper in higher education. She has advised numerous foundations on their education grantmaking strategies. Previously, as a program officer for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Ms. Burdman created and implemented investment strategies for improving college readiness and success in California. Before that, she worked as a journalist, including seven years as a staff writer for the San Francisco Chronicle.

**Linda Collins** is founder and executive director of LearningWorks, a nonprofit center that links knowledge, policy and practice in order to improve college completion. She is also founder and executive director of the Career Ladders Project, which works to foster educational and career advancement for Californians through research, policy and strategic support to community colleges and their education, community and workforce partners. Ms. Collins has extensive experience with educational policy. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Linked Learning Alliance and on the Executive Committee of the nonpartisan California EDGE Coalition focused on policy change and systems alignment to improve the state's education and workforce development systems. Prior to founding LearningWorks and the Career Ladders Project, Linda was a professor of Sociology and Interdisciplinary Studies at Los Medanos College in Pittsburg, California for over 15 years. She served two terms as president of the Academic Senate for California

Community Colleges and was the founding director of the Intersegmental Major Preparation Articulated Curriculum (IMPAC), a major initiative to improve articulation across the segments of higher education in California. Ms. Collins is the past chair of the national Committee on Community Colleges of the American Association of University Professors and served on its national Committee on Academic Freedom.

**Janet Fulks** has a Masters of Biological Sciences with an emphasis in Microbiology and a Doctorate of Education in Higher Education Leadership (dissertation on student learning outcomes). She is currently serving as interim dean of student success, which spans student affairs and instruction. Dr. Fulks has served as a biology faculty for 20 years at Bakersfield College. Her recent work with Making It Happen (MIH) colleagues focuses on ensuring students are not disproportionately impacted through the placement process. Throughout her career at Bakersfield College, Dr. Fulks has promoted student success, data informed decision-making, and STEM education. Dr. Fulks also served as the statewide primary reviewer for the Biology Curriculum Identification System (C-ID) and biology transfer degrees (Associate Degrees for Transfer) and on the Intersegmental Natural Sciences Standards Committee that developed expectations for high school students in collaboration with the University of California, California State University, and California Community College faculty. She has presented at numerous conferences, participated in statewide articulation committees, served on numerous campus committees and interacted on all levels with the STEM student population. In particular, Dr. Fulks is specialized in developing and tracking successful learning and teaching.

**Robert Gould** is vice chair of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Statistics at the University of California, Los Angeles. He has been an active member of the statistics education community, and has chaired the American Statistical Association's Advisory Committee on Teacher Enhancement and the Statistics Education Section of the American Statistical Association; he has served on the Joint Committee of the American Statistical Association and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and next year will chair the Joint Committee of the American Statistical Association and the Association of Mathematicians at Two-Year Colleges. He is lead principal investigator of the Mobilize project, which designs and implements data science curricula for high school STEM courses, and author, with Colleen Ryan, of the textbook *Introductory Statistics: Exploring the World through Data*, published by Pearson Higher Ed. In 2012, he was elected fellow of the American Statistical Association.

**John J. Hetts** is the senior director of data science at Educational Results Partnership. Building on twenty years of experience in instruction and research in higher education, his work focuses on identifying untapped potential in educational data. His work on predictive modeling of student placement into and performance in foundational courses won the 2012 Research & Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group) Best College Research award and the 2014 Association for California Community College Administrators Mertes award. He received his doctorate from the University of California, Los Angeles in Social Psychology with a specialization in Measurement and Psychometrics, and holds a B.A. with distinction and honors from Stanford University.

**Nika Hogan** is an associate professor of English at Pasadena City College (PCC) and the Reading Apprenticeship community college coordinator for the Strategic Literacy Initiative at WestEd (SLI). She founded a statewide community of practice, the Reading Apprenticeship Project, for the California Community Colleges' Success Initiative (3CSN), and since 2014, she has coordinated the Reading Apprenticeship Community College STEM Network, funded by the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust as part of their nationwide portfolio of projects supporting STEM education reform efforts based in recent research on the efficacy of active learning in STEM (particularly for underserved minority populations). Her work at PCC and with Reading Apprenticeship is focused on developing pedagogical, curricular, and institutional approaches and structures that will maximize the retention and success of all students, especially those entering college at the so-called "basic skills" level. She has been involved in many learning communities through PCC's Teaching and Learning Center, and helped to develop the nationally recognized First Year Pathways program. She has a B.A. in English and Women's Studies from the University of Michigan, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Multiethnic U.S. Literatures from the University of Massachusetts. She can be reached by email at [mihogan@pasadena.edu](mailto:mihogan@pasadena.edu). For more information about the Reading Apprenticeship Project, please visit <http://ra.3csn.org>.

**Michal Kurlaender** is an associate professor, chair of the Graduate Group in Education, and Chancellor's Fellow at the University of California, Davis School of Education. Dr. Kurlaender's work investigates students' educational pathways, in particular K-12 and postsecondary alignment, as well as access to and success in postsecondary education. She has expertise on alternative pathways to college and college readiness at both community colleges and four-year colleges and universities. In her research, Dr. Kurlaender works closely with administrative data from all three of California's public higher education segments. Dr. Kurlaender also studies the impact of racial and ethnic diversity on student outcomes. Her expertise also includes the dismantling of federal mandatory and voluntary K-12 school desegregation plans and persistent inequalities in segregated minority schools.

**Tatiana Melguizo** is an associate professor in the University of Southern California Rossier School of Education. She works in the field of economics of higher education. She uses quantitative methods of analysis and large-scale longitudinal survey data to study the association of different factors such as student trajectories and specific institutional characteristics on the persistence and educational outcomes of minority and low-income students. Dr. Melguizo received a Ph.D. in Economics of Education from Stanford

University and an M.A. in Social Policy from the London School of Economics. Her work has been published in *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *Teachers College Record*, *The Journal of Higher Education*, *The Review of Higher Education*, *Research in Higher Education* and *Higher Education*. She is a recipient of the American Education Research Association (AERA) dissertation grant as well as grants from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), AERA, and numerous private foundations and research institutes.

**John E. Montgomery** has been assistant superintendent in the Roseville Joint Union High School District since 2006. His passion for academic rigor in nurturing student achievement has developed over thirty years of experience in administration instruction, counseling, and coaching in California secondary schools. Mr. Montgomery's areas of emphasis include curriculum and instruction, student assessment, staff development, budget, and personal finance competency. Recently, he has led a charge for greater attention toward career and college readiness through the shift to an integrated math program, a districtwide expository writing assessment, blended learning, and programs of study. Mr. Montgomery has promoted a smooth transition for every student to real-world opportunities from middle school through high school and into postsecondary choices using technology as an accelerator for education.

**Paul Neal** is a Sierra College counselor, assessment/placement coordinator and career planning instructor. He has worked at Sierra College for over 25 years and is directly involved with all facets of Sierra assessment and placement services including the high school and college early assessment programs, ACCUPLACER placement testing, using multiple measures for placement and prerequisite clearance. Dr. Neal holds an Ed.D. degree in Educational Leadership from University of La Verne, a master's degree from National University and a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Xavier University of New Orleans. He has is a member of the statewide multiple measures committee and helped develop the Sierra College Multiples Placement Model, that uses high-school grades for English and math placement. Dr. Neal is an active member of the California Community College Assessment Association (CCCAA), and National College Testing and Assessment Association (NCTA), and is committed to identifying new and innovative ways to improve assessment and placement practices and policies.

**Ravin Pan** is an assistant professor of Mathematics Education at California State University, Sacramento, and the mathematics coordinator for the university's Learning Skills Center. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Prior to joining the Learning Skills Center, he was a high school mathematics teacher with Detroit Public Schools and worked as a Peace Corps education volunteer in the Central Africa Republic. He is one of the writers for the Early Academic Placement Senior Year Mathematics class. His research interests include improving the teaching of high school algebra, writing curriculum, and building communities of learners.

**Olga Rodriguez** is a research fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California and a research affiliate at the Community College Research Center at Columbia University Teachers College. She conducts quantitative and qualitative research on the impact of programs and policies on student outcomes, with a particular focus on college access and success among underserved students. Her recent research focuses on statewide developmental education reform, assessment and placement systems, and place-based efforts to help students get into and through college. She holds a Ph.D. in Economics and Education from Columbia University.

**Elisha Smith Arrillaga** is a director at the Career Ladders Project, where she provides critical support to the Oakland Health Pathways Partnership, a broad-based initiative aligning the work of county health systems, school districts, and community-based organizations to develop pathways, and also provides leadership of new efforts centered on the Career Advancement Academies and Career Pathways Trust initiatives. Dr. Smith Arrillaga also provides strategic support in connecting lessons from the field to local and state policy development. Previously, she served as a fellow in the Effective Philanthropy Group of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, where she was responsible for two portfolios of grants, one supporting San Francisco Bay Area youth-serving organizations, and another designed to help Hewlett grantees incorporate elements of the Foundation's outcomes-focused approach into strategic planning and other activities. Prior experience includes technical assistance to nonprofit organizations and government agencies such as the Employment and Training Administration at the United States Department of Labor, First 5 Los Angeles, Los Angeles Universal Preschool, and the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund (REDF). Dr. Smith Arrillaga has also worked for youth development organizations and college access programs including College Bound, Isles, and the Princeton University Preparatory Program, and she has taught and consulted on strategic planning and evaluation as a fellow at the Princeton University Community-Based Learning Initiative and the United States Office of Management and Budget. She holds a Ph.D. in Public Affairs from Princeton University, an M.S. in Survey Methodology from the University of Maryland at College Park, and her B.A. in Mathematics from Smith College.

**Lauren Sosenko** serves as the director of institutional research at Long Beach City College (LBCC). Ms. Sosenko directs the research initiatives for the college and provides usable data to faculty and other college leaders to help guide decision-making. Her work includes overseeing the alternative placement for basic skills courses at LBCC, collaborating with faculty about criteria for placements, and presenting outcomes to various audiences. Prior to her work at LBCC, Ms. Sosenko developed and managed projects to improve student success at the Institute for Evidence-Based Change (IEBC). Her projects included collecting and linking

data from multiple sources, creating data reporting templates, and facilitating discussions with stakeholders about how best to use data to improve practice. Prior to joining IEBC, Ms. Sosenko was a research associate at WestEd where she directed evaluations of dropout prevention and college preparation materials. Ms. Sosenko earned a Master of Science degree from American University in Washington, D.C. and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Michigan.

**Vickie Spanos** began her career in Kern High School District in 1987, at East Bakersfield High School, one of the 18 comprehensive high schools in the district, as an English teacher. Ms. Spanos was there for 19 years – 15 years as a teacher (in the same wonderful classroom) and 4 years as an administrator. After, she transferred to the district office as the attendance administrator (3 years) and then to Golden Valley High School as an assistant principal of instruction (3 years). This year, Ms. Spanos is beginning her 6th year as the director of instruction at the district office, where she oversees projects, programs, and general practices related to instruction.

**Katherine F. Stevenson** is a professor of Mathematics at California State University, Northridge (CSUN), and since August 2009 has been the director of the CSUN Developmental Mathematics Program. In that capacity she oversees courses for 2500-3000 students and supervises 25-40 instructors and 50-80 tutors on a budget of approximately \$1.5 million. She has more than twenty years of experience teaching mathematics and received the CSUN outstanding teaching award in 2008 and outstanding service award in 2015. Recently she has overseen several course redesign projects for multi-section, high failure rate, entry-level mathematics courses. She has published two articles on the logistics of implementing such projects. In 2012, the projects coalesced to form a consortium of California state universities and community colleges dedicated to improving entry-level mathematics success. This consortium has received more than 2 million dollars in funding from the Gates Foundation. Dr. Stevenson received her Ph.D. in Algebraic Geometry from the University of Pennsylvania.

**Robert Garcia Tagorda** leads major reform efforts in large organizations. He specializes in the implementation of data analytics, strategic planning, and change management. As the director of equity, access, and college & career readiness at the Long Beach Unified School District, Mr. Tagorda manages a \$40 million annual budget, 30 staff members, and numerous systemwide advisory committees. He leads the development and execution of the strategic plan, which impacts over 80,000 students in more than 80 campuses. Upon assuming this position, Mr. Tagorda led the merger of four separate divisions into a single integrated department. He played a critical role in decentralizing fiscal resources to schools, building new planning tools, and involving key stakeholders in decision-making processes. At the same time, he supervised the transformation of the high school application and selection system, which serves over 6,000 families yearly. In previous assignments, Mr. Tagorda led wide-ranging initiatives as a member of the Superintendent's Office. He managed a college readiness program that employed innovative data analytics to improve student services, raise the graduation rate, expand higher education enrollment, and increase scholarships to nearly \$100 million. He also developed the district's first technology master plan, supporting over 20,000 workstations. Before coming to Long Beach through the Broad Residency (a nationally competitive leadership development program), Mr. Tagorda gained experience in both the private and public sectors. At Maximus Inc., he had responsibility for business development and operations in the executive search practice. He also completed internships at the Government Accountability Office and the Rose Institute of State and Local Government. Mr. Tagorda graduated *summa cum laude* from Claremont McKenna College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics. He earned a master's degree in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, where he was a Truman Scholar and a Teaching Fellow. In the broader educational field, he served as a fellow for the Executive Instructional Leadership Program at the National Center for Urban School Transformation.

**Phil Tucher** has led Oakland Unified School District's transition to the Common Core math since 2010. With experience as a former site administrator, school coach, co-director of Mills College's math and science teacher preparation program, expert professional developer, and an award winning teacher and mentor, Mr. Tucher's professional passion over more than 25 years in education has been equity in the urban mathematics classroom. Much of his work has focused on mathematical reasoning. Mr. Tucher has consulting experience with curricular projects including College Preparatory Mathematics (University of California, Davis) and Middle School Math Investigations Series (University of California, Berkeley). He is a co-author of *Teaching as Principled Practiced: Managing Complexity for Social Justice*. Mr. Tucher holds a B.A. in Physics from Williams College, a Master of Arts in Teaching from Stanford University, and his administrative services credential from California State University, East Bay.

**Kristin Webster** is an assistant professor in the Mathematics Department at California State University, Los Angeles. She is the director of the Developmental Mathematics program and the Mathematics Liaison to the First-Year Experience Program at California State University, Los Angeles. The First-Year Experience Program facilitates freshman student transition to the expectations and responsibilities of a university campus. Through this program, Dr. Webster supports the students' academic needs as they progress through developmental and college level mathematics coursework. As the director of the Developmental Mathematics program, her duties include student advisement and enrollment assistance, faculty and teaching assistant evaluations, adaptation and maintenance of curricula, and coordinating summer workshops. Dr. Webster is currently a board member of the California Association for Developmental Education (CalADE), for which she was president in the 2013-2014 academic year. The CalADE community is committed to communication and professional development related to ongoing research in developmental education.

Dr. Webster's research interests involve best practices in developmental mathematics and she is highly interested in effective teaching strategies and course redesign in developmental mathematics.

**Terrence Willett** is the director of planning, research and knowledge systems at Cabrillo Community College and a consulting researcher with the Research & Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group). Mr. Willett has 15 years of experience in program planning and evaluation, working with large scale relational databases, conducting statistical analyses including predictive modeling using traditional and machine learning/data mining techniques, and geographic information systems (GIS) analyses. He is currently leading the RP Group's technical assistance for the Design It! Build It! Ship It! (DBS) implementation of Contra Costa Community College District's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant and is part of the team working on the Multiple Measures Assessment Project (MMAP). Mr. Willett has also directed and participated in many recent RP Group projects, including the evaluation of the California Acceleration Project (CAP), the Student Transcript-Enhanced Placement Study (STEPS) and an assessment of the potential academic impact of study abroad participation. Previously, he was the director of research for Cal-PASS and HI-PASS (statewide intersegmental data systems for California and Hawai'i), director of research for Gavilan Community College, where he also taught field ecology, and research technician for Cabrillo Community College. Mr. Willett holds an M.S. in Environmental Studies from California State University, San Jose, and a B.A. in Psychology from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

**Bruce Yoshiwara** has been working to improve educational opportunities of students for over twenty-five years. He has served on the executive boards of the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges (AMATYC), the California Mathematics Council Community Colleges-South, and the Southern California-Nevada Section of the Mathematical Association of America (MAA). He was a member of the Curriculum Framework and Evaluation Criteria Committee which was charged with writing the California Mathematics Framework to align with the Common Core state standards (and was the only community college faculty to serve on that 19-member committee). Dr. Yoshiwara was honored with California's 2011 Hayward Award for Outstanding Community College Faculty, AMATYC's 2009 Teaching Excellence Award, and the MAA Southern California-Nevada Section's 2009 Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics.

**Evelyn Young Spath** currently serves as executive assistant to the president at California State University, Bakersfield. She earned an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from California State University, Fresno, in the collaborative doctoral program with California State University, Bakersfield. Her research focuses on the alignment between the California State University's entry-level mathematics placement test and the Common Core content standards for higher mathematics (grades 9-12).

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