

NEWSLETTER

GEOGRAPHY NEED NOT BE DESTINY: LATINX RURAL STUDENTS AND THE SPATIAL (IN)EQUITY GAP

this issue

— By Ty McNamee

On October 16, 2019, over 25 students, faculty, and staff from across Teachers College and the Columbia University community gathered to hear Assistant Professor at the University of Texas at San Antonio Vanessa Sansone’s talk “Geography Need Not Be Destiny: Latinx Rural Students and the Spatial (In)Equity Gap.” The event, co-sponsored by Rural Student Group, HPSE, and Coalition of Latinx Scholars provided a forum for discussion on the college access experiences of rural Latinx students.

Additionally, Latinxs make up 21% of the rural population in the country, and they represent 83% of all new rural population growth, settling in new areas across the United States, such as Georgia, Iowa, West Virginia, and North Dakota. However, even with this population growth, rural Latinxs hold the lowest college attainment rates among any rural racial/ethnic group, as well as among their urban counterparts.

In order to begin to address the disparities amongst rural Latinx students, it is important to understand the systemic inequities that exist and create barriers for nonmetro Latinx student college attainment. Even though rural Latinx students have high college going aspirations, Latinx students and their families face an underfunded K-12 public school system and a lower median household income than White families, and, in some areas of the rural borderlands, they lack necessities such as

Congratulations! Pg 2

Convocation Pg 3

Meet Dianne! Pg 4



Professor Sansone detailed that higher education leaders, both at the institutional and state-wide level, have begun to focus practice and policy efforts on recruiting rural students at the postsecondary level. However, Professor Sansone’s discussion shone a light on the need for disaggregating the diversity of rural student populations, particularly around race and ethnicity. For rural populations, Latinxs represent a growing share of recent population growth in the rural US.



potable water, septic tank or sewer systems, paved roads, and Broadband internet. Furthermore, college resources are

continued on page 2

CONGRATULATIONS!

Professor Anna Neumann was awarded the 2019 Research Achievement Award of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) in Portland, Oregon, November 15, 2019. This is ASHE's top award for career-long research accomplishments.



Aimee LaPointe Terosky (EDD 2005) has been awarded Saint Joseph's University Justice Award for her work with the Samuel Gompers K-8 School in the School District of Philadelphia, and for her work and teaching in schools in Haiti, Chile, Bolivia, & Peru. In the words of Rennie Parker (Gompers Community Coordinator) "I wish every public, urban school had an Aimee Terosky in their corner!"

Mildred Garcia (EDD 1987), President of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), was the invited keynote speaker at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, November 15, 2019, Portland Oregon.

Professor Aaron M. Pallas and **Professor Anna Neumann** have just published a new book: *Convergent Teaching: Tools to Spark Deeper Learning in College* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019). See: <https://jhupbooks.press.jhu.edu/title/convergent-teaching>

A paper led by **Dr. Milagros Castillo-Montoya** (EDD 2013), **Joshua Abreu**, and **Abdul Abad** (EDD student) was published on September 19, 2019 on "Racially liberatory pedagogy: a Black Lives Matter approach to education" in a special issue in the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*.

Marisol Jimenez was awarded a doctorate in October 2019. Her dissertation is titled *Teaching at Hispanic-Serving Institutions: A Study of Faculty Teaching Practices and the Organizational Contexts that Support Them*.

EDD student **Chase McNamee** was promoted to Director of Alumni Relations at Bank Street College of Education.

Jessica Ostrow Michel (EDD 2019) was awarded a postdoctoral research fellowship in the School for Environment and Sustainability at the University of Michigan.

Leslie A. Williams (EDD 2019) was appointed Visiting Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership at University of Hartford.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

insufficient, as they are not in Spanish and don't address aspects specific to the college choice process for rural Latinx students.

In Professor Sansone's presentation, she spoke of her team's research project exploring rural Latinx student experiences in rural areas of Texas. Inequities persist for areas, and the highest rates of inequity are in regions heavily populated by Latinx communities. Professor Sansone reported that rural Latinx enrollment of undergraduate students is 30.9%, while the enrollment of rural White, non-Latinx undergraduate students is 49.3%. Her team found that rural Latinx students did not have access to non-regional college recruiters and college-going resources and agents. They also faced geospatial barriers, including lack of access and opportunity to pursue resources and build relationships with institutional actors.



Professor Sansone and her team point to the need to think about admissions in terms of how to alleviate these barriers for rural Latinx students. Practices and policies must address race, class, and rurality, taking into account spatial inequities, in order to begin making change. As Professor Sansone and team state, "Without such

approaches, rural Latinx places/communities will continue to be disadvantaged by a system that exploits their needs/realities, advantages urban centers, and contributes to spatial inequities in the ability to access postsecondary opportunities."



HPSE would like to thank Professor Sansone for her informative and impactful presentation to the Teachers College and broader Columbia communities. Co-curricular talks like these complement our program's curriculum that is rooted in access, equity, inclusion, and social justice, and we are excited to continue speaking about rurality's relationship with race and ethnicity within higher education spaces.



May 21, 2019—HPSE Graduation Brunch

CONVOCATION 2020

Tuesday, May 19, 2:00pm
Masters Ceremony for
Department of Organization &
Leadership

Wednesday, May 20, 10:30am
Columbia University
Commencement

Wednesday, May 20, 2:00pm
Doctoral Hooding Ceremony

For more information:
convocation.tc.columbia.edu



May 22, 2019—After Doctoral Hooding Ceremony
L to R: Prof. Anna Neumann, Dr. Leslie A. Williams, Prof. Noah D. Drezner,
Dr. Maria Anderson-Long, Prof. Corbin Campbell, and Dr. Jessica Ostrow Michel



May 21, 2019—President Thomas Bailey and Addy Peery

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: MEET DIANNE!



Dianne Delima, Ed.D.

My journey to this point in the doctoral program has certainly been an interesting one. I never really thought I would pursue a doctoral degree. I started thinking about graduate school when I was working as an afterschool teacher in an elementary school in Long Beach, California. I have always had an interest in social justice and diversity issues, and I knew being an educator would be one way to help my community in addressing these issues. While working with youth and their families, I wondered a lot about the broader institutional structures that shape the educational trajectories for low-income students of color. This interest motivated me to pursue my Master's degree in Language, Reading and Culture at the University of Arizona. During my time there, I got the opportunity to take classes with extraordinary faculty who opened my eyes to multicultural theories and contemporary policy implications on young people's schooling. One faculty member whose ideas I really latched on to was Norma González. Her (and Luis Moll's) Funds of Knowledge lens shaped the way I viewed students as holders of valuable knowledge and as members of knowledgeable communities. While in Arizona, I did my Master's thesis on the Funds of Knowledge of Filipino-American undergraduate students. This research became the drive towards my pursuit of a graduate degree in Higher Education.

I initially came to TC wanting to learn more about how low-income students of color utilized their Funds of Knowledge as a means to access higher education. As I began to take classes with Anna Neumann, I began to reach back to my academic roots of wanting to focus on teaching and learning. My current dissertation focuses on the teaching and learning experiences of first-generation college students of color, particularly as they are enrolled in courses that focus on diversity. My dissertation research is rooted in my prior work and interests in understanding further the social, political, and educational implications for underrepresented students, especially students of color who are the first in their families to pursue higher education. I recently had the opportunity to publish an article in *College Teaching*, entitled "Making a case for a funds of knowledge approach to teaching and learning for first-generation college students," where I make an argument for the adoption Funds of Knowledge as a faculty pedagogical approach

for teaching of first-generation college students of color.

I have been incredibly fortunate to work with amazing faculty at TC on scholarly projects that have supported my academic interests. First, with Anna, Liza Bolitzer and Jolie Harris Woodson in the MetroCITI project, we looked at how faculty teaching in urban higher education institutions taught and developed a curriculum for high diverse student populations. From my involvement with this project, I have gotten a more on-the-ground look into how faculty perceive their students, especially students who are considered first-generation. Having this kind of access to faculty's thoughts has been very helpful in how I view the ways in which my own research can be helpful in the field of teaching and learning in higher education. Most recently, my work with the Center for Understanding Race Education (CURE) at TC has allowed me to work with Amy Stuart Wells and amazing graduate students and faculty around the college. Even though a majority of my graduate background is in higher education, through my work in CURE I have learned a great deal about K-12 public education and the policies, pedagogies, and community experiences that shape the schooling experiences of young people around New York City.

As I come closer and closer to the end of my time in TC, I think back to all of the people that have supported my scholarly identity and research pursuits and it makes me truly appreciate the community in the HPSE program. These folks include Lucy Tam, Marisol Jimenez, Jolie Harris Woodson, and Leslie Williams, all have been integral to my doctoral journey (I would literally be lost without them). To folks who came before me, H. Kenny Nienhusser, Milagros Castillo-Montoya and Deniece Dortch, who continue to be amazingly supportive despite the distance between us. To our amazing HPSE faculty, Anna, Noah, Katie, and Janice - I cannot thank them enough for their insights, advice, inside jokes (e.g. #FakeNews), and feel-good stories that continue to uplift me.

On this note, I'd like to end with a quote from Paulo Freire: "Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the **practice of freedom**, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world." — from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

Important Dates:

December 2: Spring registration begins

January 22: Spring term begins

February 4: Last day to add and drop courses

March 15 to March 22: Spring Break

May 12: Spring term ends