LB COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

**2026**

**WELCOME TO THE**

# College of Education Leadership Symposium

# Centering Community, Justice and Belonging

**9 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

**Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026**

**CSULB Anatol Center**

# A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Welcome to the 2026 College of Education Leadership Symposium. We are honored to receive the baton from the Department of Educational Leadership in organizing this event, which has been offered annually since 2011. This has always been an opportunity to bring together students, alumni, community partners and CED staff and faculty to share our research, programs and ideas on how to increase equity and success in our educational and community institutions. This year we expand our reach across the College of Education, opening the symposium to all programs and to their community partners. I'm excited that we are fortunate to expand the impact of the symposium, always so thoughtfully planned and executed by Educational Leadership. Thank you!

Over the 15 years of the symposium, we have had a range of scholars, policy makers and practitioners ground the symposium through their keynote addresses. Scholars such as Daniel Solarzano, Frank Harris, Michael Dumas, Tara Yosso, Oscar Navarro and Robin Kelley have shared their scholarship with us, encouraging us to bring their recommendations and insights to the practice of urban education.

Policy makers and leaders such as Christopher Nellum, Mike Munoz, Nancy Gutierréz, Patrick O'Donnell, Juan Benitez, Steadman Graham, Carl Cohn and Jose Alquist stretched our thinking by sharing and generated a will to do more by sharing their experiences with change and transformation. This year we welcome Dr. Tyrone C. Howard, who holds the Pritzker Family Endowed Chair and is a professor in the School of Education & Information Studies at UCLA. Dr. Howard's research on systems, structures, policies and practices that impact equity in urban education is perfect for helping us all to plan for "Centering Community, Justice and Belonging" in our work and our lives.

I am impressed by the Spark Sessions, Workshops, Posters and Paper Presentations we will experience today. We will hear from our students, alumni, faculty, staff and community partners on a range of topics that directly impact us as educators, counselors and leaders. I appreciate their willingness to share what they know and have learned with us so that we can improve our thinking, practice and being. An event of this magnitude takes the work of many. I send a heartfelt, giant thank you to the staff in the College who have planned this event: Christine Bedell, Kimberly Word, Emily Choi, Maya Lancero and Cecilia Fonseca. The Educational Leadership Racial Equity Fellows and its Racial Equity Committee have spearheaded the development of the program, this year offering more programs than ever. Thank you: Johnathan Davis, Sadaf Ashraf, Daniel Esquivel, Porscha Rayon Singh, Michael Pile, Fatima Rosas Huerta, Hilaleh Hamad, Dev Rodgers, Jonathan O'Brien and Alejandra Priede. Associate Dean Bre Evans-Santiago and EDLD Department Chair Angela Locks have led the way — I appreciate their leadership, especially in this transition year.

Finally, a huge thank you to all our participants who are sharing their Saturday with us. I know you will learn a great deal and I hope that our focus on Community, Justice and Belonging will inspire your head and heart.

— Anna M. Ortiz, Dean
College of Education

# SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

**CHECK-IN**
8:30 a.m.-  9 a.m. | Anatol Center

**WELCOME/OPENING**
9 a.m. - 9:05 a.m.

**INTRODUCTION OF RACIAL EQUITY FELLOWS AND SESSIONS**
9:05 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.

**SESSION I**
9:20 a.m. - 10:20 a.m. | CED class and conference rooms

**SESSION II**
10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. | CED class and conference rooms

**POSTER SESSION**
11:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.

**LUNCH SERVED**
11:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. | Anatol Center

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS AND Q&A**
12:15 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.

**CLOSING REMARKS**
1:45 p.m. - 2 p.m.

During breakout sessions, please secure permission before audio/video recording or taking photographs.

We invite you to be fully present during the keynote address and Q&A. Audio/video recording is strictly prohibited during both. Please silence and secure your phones.

# KEYNOTE SPEAKER
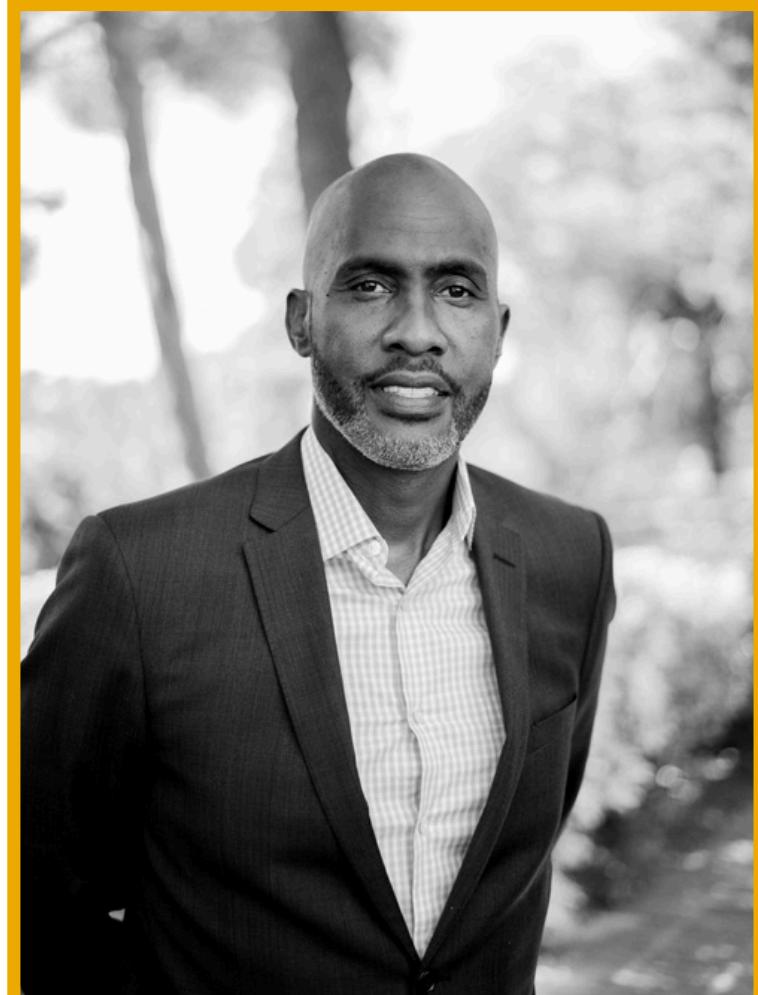
Tyrone C. Howard is the Pritzker Family Endowed Chair and Professor of Education in the School of Education and Information Studies at UCLA.

A leading expert on race, culture, and educational equity, Howard's research focuses on issues of access and opportunity for minoritized student populations. He has published more than 100 scholarly works, including peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and technical reports.

Among his best-selling books are "Why Race & Culture Matter in Schools", "All Students Must Thrive," and his latest work, "Equity Now: Justice, Repair, & Belonging in Schools", which was recognized by Greater Good Magazine as one of the top 10 favorite books for educators in 2024.

Howard is the founder and director of the UCLA Black Male Institute and co-director of the UCLA Pritzker Center for Strengthening Children and Families. He also serves as faculty director of the UCLA Center for the Transformation of Schools. In 2024, Howard served as president of the American Education Research Association, the world's largest organization devoted to educational research and policy.

A native of Compton, Calif., Howard began his career as a classroom teacher in the Compton Unified School District. He is a member of both the National Academy of Education and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and has been recognized by Education Week as one of the 200 most influential scholars shaping educational practice, policy, and reform.

Howard is a graduate of Jordan High School in Long Beach. He earned a BA in Economics from UC Irvine, an MA in Education from Cal State Dominguez Hills, and a Doctor of Philosophy, Curriculum and Instruction, from the University of Washington.

## SPARK

AS-241

**Digital Age Curriculum: Developing Students' Critical Analysis and Application of Media Sources Through Cross-Technological Platforms**

Thao-Vy Nguyen, M.S. in Educational Technology and Media Leadership Student

Students are exposed to current world issues and trends all within their mobile devices, and among these sources are biases and misinformation that students can easily access and interact with. This media content perpetuates unreliable narratives that can foster harmful stereotypes and influence students' development, affecting their actions in schools and communities. Students should not only be exposed to various digital tools and how to use them, but also be taught to cross-analyze resources through various technological mediums and apply their findings through human interactions. Each subject-matter curriculum must go beyond general digital citizenship by enforcing specific standards that connect one digital platform to another, and how information is created, altered, or skewed as it translates from individuals to machine learning. By guiding students to learn how to critically analyze media sources through technology, they can amplify their own personal narratives responsibly and become change agents in their communities.

## SPARK

AS-241

**ChatGPT, An Innovative Blessing or Existential Threat?: A Duoethnography Between an English Student and a Technologist**

Anna Bogdanovic, M.A. in English Student

According to a recent report, 700 million people use ChatGPT for various tasks, including writing (Chatterji et al 2025). A study of 384 students reports that 8.85% used ChatGPT for writing daily, while 42.45% used it for writing weekly (Wang et al 2024). As Artificial Intelligence's large language models increase in ubiquity, researchers must interrogate whether these models aid or hinder academic work. Through a collaborative autoethnography between a technologist and an English student, this study asks how ChatGPT might assist or hinder the research process at the literature review stage. Malik & Terzidis' Hybrid Framework (2025), which merges the computational capacity of AI with "human expertise," was used as the lens. Findings show that ChatGPT has the potential to assist the literature review stage of research, but hallucinations and ethical problems lengthen the process. ChatGPT is not a research substitute, but a potential tool for assistance for synopsizing or synthesizing literature.

## SPARK

**AS-241**

**Conceptual Framework: Universal Design for Learning and Disability Critical Theory**

Alexandria Cordon, Ed.D. in Educational Leadership Student

This spark session will explain a conceptual framework that addresses learning and advocacy needs for students with a disability (SWD). This framework merges with a teaching model that centers inclusion of SWD and a framework that advocates for inclusion of SWD in education. The framework blends these two concepts to answer what does inclusive teaching look like and why inclusive teaching is important for SWD. Therefore, this spark session will explain and defend why a blended theory of universal design for learning (UDL) (Center for Applied Special Technology [CAST], n.d.) and disability critical theory (DisCrit) (Annamma et al., 2013) as an appropriate theory for research that investigates disability accommodations and inclusive learning. This session will explain both theories but also how the theories fit together. The session will also review recent literature and finally how the framework can be used in research.

# WORKSHOP

**EED-41**

**The ABCs of Teacher Retention: Accountability, Belonging, and Community**

Janelle Harmon, Assistant Principal, and Megan Traver, Program Administrator, Long Beach Unified School District

Teachers of Color significantly improve academic and social-emotional outcomes, yet retention remains a critical challenge. Drawing from Harmon's and Traver's combined educational experience and research on teacher preparation and retention, this workshop is designed for TK-12 district and site leaders to develop actionable strategies to build cultures of mutual accountability, belonging, and community.

The presenters highlight that these three pillars are essential for creating environments where Teachers of Color thrive. Mutual accountability ensures shared responsibility in dismantling institutional barriers, while a strong sense of belonging allows educators to feel authentically supported. By fostering a robust professional community, leaders can motivate staff to engage in essential accountability measures, such as goal-setting, data monitoring, and celebrating success along the way. Participants will learn how the synergy of these leadership practices can promote strategic retention and improve overall school culture, resulting in greater achievement for students.

# WORKSHOP

**AS-242**

**First-Generation Graduate Students: Navigating the Hidden Curriculum**

Mary Anne Rose, Interim Director, CED Student Success and Advising Center

This session explores our understanding of how first-generation graduate students navigate the unspoken norms and social guidelines within higher education, also known as the hidden curriculum. Together we will discuss the socialization process common within graduate education and reimagine how to help first-generation graduate students navigate the hidden curriculum. Participants will take away thought-provoking prompts to generate change in their communities of practice.

## WORKSHOP

**Human Subjects Protection & IRB for Dissertation and Thesis Research**

Simon Kim, Allan Taing, Tim Ryan, and Trong Pham, CSULB Faculty and Staff

This workshop prepares graduate students to navigate ethical and regulatory requirements for dissertation and thesis research involving human participants. Topics include Belmont principles, defining human subjects research, selecting the correct IRB review category, and avoiding common pitfalls in student-led projects. Emphasis on advisor roles, consent and recruitment of peers or minors, FERPA considerations, and protecting confidentiality. Participants will review key sections of the IRB application and learn about the CSULB IRB submission and review processes (IRBNet).

## WORKSHOP

**Race, Racism, and PK-12 Curriculum**

Hilaleh Hamad, Ed.D. in Educational Leadership Student, and Sadaf Ashraf, Ed.D. in Educational Leadership Alumna

Curriculum has the power to reproduce injustice or cultivate belonging, it depends on how we design and teach it. This interactive workshop invites educators to unpack how race and racism are embedded in K–12 curriculum and to reimagine lessons that affirm identity, justice, and belonging.

Grounded in frameworks of Critical Race Theory in Education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2017), and Belonging-Centered Design (Powell & Menendian, 2016), participants will explore how curriculum narratives reinforce or challenge inequities in schooling. Using these frameworks, educators will engage in reflective dialogue and a hands-on curriculum analysis activity to identify bias, representation, and power across texts and instructional materials.

Participants will then apply principles of justice- and belonging-centered curriculum design (Cook-Sather & Des-Ogugua, 2019) to redesign lessons that highlight community voices and affirm diverse student identities. The session concludes with guided reflection and action planning.

## PAPER

### Exploring Publications about Anti-racism in Academic Journals

Estella Chizhik, CSULB Teacher Education Department Chair, and Tamika Lovelace, Administrative Coordinator, Department of Africana Studies, San Diego State University

This study examines trends in scholarly attention to anti-racist practices following the sociopolitical events of 2020, with a focus on differences between empirical and conceptual publications. We analyze whether the events of 2020 were associated with changes in the volume and type of peer-reviewed articles featuring anti-racism or anti-racist in their titles. Two research questions guide the study: (1) To what extent did scholarly interest in anti-racist practices increase after 2020? and (2) How do publication patterns differ between empirical and conceptual scholarship?  An analysis of over 500 articles published between 2015 and 2025 reveals statistically significant increases in overall publication volume and across categories (case studies, empirical, and conceptual) in the post-2020 period. Conceptual articles surged immediately after 2020 but declined amid growing opposition to DEI. These findings suggest that anti-racist scholarship, and perhaps educational research in general, is shaped by broader sociopolitical forces.

## PAPER

### Dimensions of Race-Related Cultural Taxation Among University Staff and Faculty

Anna M. Ortiz, College of Education Dean

Cultural taxation in higher education refers to the disproportionate burden placed on faculty and staff from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds to engage in diversity-related service and emotional labor (Padilla, 1994). This qualitative study draws on focus group data from 28 faculty and staff of color at a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) to explore their experiences with cultural taxation and identify strategies for institutional change to address these inequities. Analysis revealed seven key themes, including viewing this work as a "labor of love" while simultaneously enduring institutional abuse, inequitable compensation, and significant emotional exhaustion. Participants also proposed actionable strategies to mitigate these burdens, including comprehensive training, workload redistribution, formal recognition, and integrating diversity-related efforts into promotion criteria alongside improved institutional accountability. Findings highlight the need for policy reforms that acknowledge and equitably support the invisible labor historically shouldered by faculty and staff of color, fostering a more equitable campus community.

## PAPER

### Exploring How Early Childhood Educators with Adverse Childhood Experiences Foster Responsive Classrooms Through Transformational Healing

Lauren Muñoz, Ed.D. in Educational Leadership Student

Teachers in early childhood education (ECE) play a vital role in shaping children's emotional development while often carrying personal histories of adversity themselves. Although research on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) has documented long-term effects on health and parenting, far less attention has been given to how these experiences shape teachers' professional identity and pedagogical practice. This qualitative study explores how ECE teachers with ACEs engage in processes of transformational healing and agency as they navigate the emotional demands of teaching. Guided by Constructivist Self-Development Theory and Hope Theory, the study examines how teachers make meaning of their trauma histories and translate that awareness into responsive classroom practices. Using semi-structured interviews with 25 teachers across diverse ECE programs in California, the study highlights how teachers transform lived experiences of adversity into empathy, intentionality, and purpose in their work with young children. Findings call for trauma-informed, healing-centered policies that support ECE teachers.

## PAPER

### Questioning as a Window into Pre-Service Teachers' Facilitation of Mathematical Discussions in a Virtual Classroom

Jenna Ersheid, Liberal Studies Student, and Pavneet Kaur Bharaj, Assistant Professor

Effective questioning anchors productive mathematical discussion, yet we know little about how elementary pre-service teachers (PSTs) enact questioning in simulated teaching. This study analyzes PSTs who led avatar-mediated discussions in a Virtual Teaching Simulator (VTS) on a Grade-4 topic: finding fractions between given fractions. Using a deductive–inductive approach, we began with Boaler and Brodie's (2004) framework, followed by open coding. Preliminary findings indicate heavy reliance on elicitation and orchestration: probing for explanation (8.87%), prompting reflection on strategy use (7.68%), eliciting agreement/disagreement (3.72%), exploring mathematical meanings/relationships (3.27%), and revoicing (2.93%). In contrast, moves central to disciplinary argumentation were less common: asking students to compare strategies (2.03%), asking one group to defend another's idea (1.19%), building consensus (1.88%), and connecting student ideas—linking strategies (0.94%) or restating for coherence (0.45%). We argue that VTS, paired with guided analysis, yields actionable records of practice that encourage PSTs to sustain multi-turn, student-driven argumentation.

## SPARK

AS-241

**In Between the Value of Shades in Academia: Not White Enough, Not Brown Enough, Not Black Enough**

Sandy Banos, M.A. in Equity, Education and Social Justice Student

The Latinx community in higher education is often framed as a unified identity, yet students experience differential treatment based on skin tone, hair texture, and other phenotypic features. This study conceptualizes colorism as a structural system of power, one that operates within Latinx communities and educational institutions to shape access to belonging, representation, and support. Latinx students racialized as nonwhite often occupy an in-between space, navigating educational spaces where racial and cultural belonging is conditional. Drawing on Critical Race Theory and Latino Critical Race Theory, this study examines how phenotypic stratification and intra-community color hierarchies affect Latinx students' identity formation, campus belonging, and access to support. Through testimonios and interviews, it centers the lived experiences of students with diverse racialized phenotypes, particularly those marginalized by colorism. This study offers insight into how institutions can foster more inclusive, racially conscious environments that support the full spectrum of Latinx student experiences.

## SPARK

AS-241

**The Catalyst for Inclusive Education: Empowering Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students with Assistive Technology in Virtual Learning Environments in the City of Monterey Park, California**

Bixia Chen, M.S. in Educational Technology and Media Leadership Student

With technology enabling broader teaching and learning practices, educational technology leadership faces the challenge of proactive adjustment of educational Assistive Technology (AT) resources for social justice. This action research employs three methods, document analysis, a questionnaire, and interviews, aimed to analyze the implementation of AT in traditional educational settings and determine whether AT could become the "co-pilot" of inclusive education, empowering deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) students within virtual education platforms. The study's findings indicate that existing traditional educational resources are insufficient to accomplish equitable education. There is an urgent need to create a more inclusive, diverse, and flexible reformable educational environment, and promote the integration of cutting-edge innovative technologies into educational design to create a productivity-enhancing educational setup.

## SPARK

### The Joy of Teaching: The Joy of Teaching: Choosing Joy Over Hoops, Hurdles, and Gates

Estella Chizhik, Teacher Education Department Chair, and Rhonda Haramis, Lecturer and Coordinator of the Multiple Subject Credential Program

Teacher education programs are shaped by extensive guidelines, policies, and standards that often restrict how future teachers are prepared for classroom success. These constraints are experienced by students and coincide with a steady decline in public perception of teaching. Since the 2010s, the profession's perceived prestige has dropped sharply: only 3% of high school students envision becoming teachers, and in 2020, just 8.1% of BA and MA graduates majored in education (Kraft & Lyon, 2024). For those who do enter teacher preparation, the process is frequently stressful. Clinical practice demands, identity negotiations, and institutional expectations contribute to anxiety (Naplitano et al., 2022), while elementary candidates report challenges with classroom management, confidence, and support (Carr & Hough, 2024). This paper describes how CSULB's MSCP program centers joy — guided by Muhammad's five pursuits and Unearthing Joy — to counter structural barriers and sustain teacher candidates' commitment to the profession.

## SPARK

### In Between and Unseen: An Exploration of Multiracial Identity and Sense of Belonging

Marci Matsushita-Sanchez, Ed.D. in Educational Leadership Student

As California's multiracial population is projected to increase by more than 200% by 2041 (Seshadri, 2024), community colleges, many designated as Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), must better understand how multiracial students experience campus environments. Grounded in Harris's (2016) Critical Multiracial Theory (MultiCrit), this qualitative study will examine how multiracial students at California MSI community colleges describe their interactions with peers, faculty, and staff, and how these relationships shape their sense of belonging (West & Maffini, 2019). Using narrative inquiry, the study will draw on semi-structured interviews with 36 multiracial students, followed by focus groups for member checking.

Consistent with prior research (Harris, 2017), findings are expected to highlight experiences of differential micro-racialization and identity fractionation within monoracial institutional frameworks, alongside strategies students use to cultivate belonging through community networks. Implications for equity-minded practice and student support in MSI contexts will be explored.

## SPARK

### Where Do I Belong? Exploring the Impact of Belonging on the Educational Experiences of Black Foster Youth

Traci Ausby, Ed.D. in Educational Leadership Student

Of the approximately 437,000 children in foster care in 2022, nearly 62% were school-aged (AFCARS, 2022). Black foster youth represent one of the largest student populations within U.S. schools (Barrat, 2023), yet research on foster youth remains race-evasive (Kennedy, 2023). The specific educational needs of Black foster youth are insufficiently examined. Existing scholarship indicates that Black foster youth are situated within a matrix of oppression, including education, child welfare, and the juvenile legal system (Johnson, 2021). These inequities impact Black foster youths' sense of belonging in school. The uncertainty of their home lives and their need for supportive relationships can compound these challenges. However, research demonstrates that educators can be sources of support by fostering trusting relationships, cultivating inclusive classroom environments, and being mentors (Crenshaw-Williams, 2021). Developing critical consciousness and culturally responsive pedagogical practices is essential for supporting the educational success of Black foster youth (Parra Lopez et al., 2024).

# WORKSHOP

**EED-41**

**Leading for Culturally Responsive and Trauma-informed Student Financial Wellness in Educational Settings**

Danielle Muñoz, CSULB Director of CARES and Basic Needs, and Rebecca Bustamante, College of Education Associate Dean

California's new high school financial literacy graduation requirement presents an exciting opportunity to equip students with essential life skills—but implementation must go beyond basic budgeting and credit lessons and address historical systemic inequities, cultural relevance, and financial trauma. This interactive workshop will introduce K–12 and higher education leaders to a new framework for delivering financial education that is trauma-informed and culturally responsive to ensure students feel safe, respected, and understood, while navigating financial systems that traditionally perpetuate financial inequities.

Participating educational leaders will explore the (a) impact of financial stress and systemic inequities on students, (b) be introduced to a new framework for approaching financial education, (c) engage in reflective activities to examine their own assumptions and practices, and (d) uncover and apply strategies for creating inclusive and empowering financial education program in their own educational environments.

# WORKSHOP

**AS-242**

**Embracing Organizational Change: The Creation of a Student Success and Advising Center**

Mary Anne Rose, Interim Director of the CED Student Success and Advising Center, and Gabriela Robles, Student Success Advisor for Graduate Programs

Discover the transformative journey of the CSULB College of Education's Student Success and Advising Center to become a holistic student success team. During the 2024/2025 academic year, three distinct offices merged to form a single, student-centered hub that merged student check-ins, advising, and offered new wrap-around services such as financial aid and wellness. Staff members from the Student Success and Advising Center will share their experiences and creative strategies employed to ensure all students continued to receive excellent service, including how we addressed challenges to build a cohesive and effective team.

## WORKSHOP

AS-243

**The Democratic Value of Higher Education**

Irie De Lilly, Ed.D. in Educational Leadership Student, and Liza Ivezaj, Student Success Data Analyst for the College of Liberal Arts, and Ed.D. in Educational Leadership Student

This workshop examines the value of democratic education in higher education through three main areas: civic engagement, civil discourse, and democratic equality. Grounded in historical, philosophical, and modern debates about prioritizing civic versus technical skills, participants will analyze topics like declining voter participation, digital literacy gaps, and the erosion of democratic norms on college campuses. They will also learn how to distinguish political from politicized education and explore the democratic role of the Humanities. Through facilitated activities, participants will design institution-specific strategies for fostering democratic practices and cultivating informed citizens.

## WORKSHOP

AS-244

**Decolonizing Research Through Culturally Responsive Methodologies: The Practice of Kuwentuhan**

Jason Lu, Ed.D. in Educational Leadership Student

This workshop explores storytelling as a pathway toward decolonial research practice. Grounded in the Filipino tradition of Kuwentuhan, a communal act of story-sharing that nurtures relationships, memory, and collective wisdom. Participants will examine how colonial frameworks have shaped dominant research paradigms and how culturally responsive methodologies can re-center participants' voices. Through an interactive Kuwentuhan circle, participants will experience story-sharing as both a method and a pedagogy.

By the end of the session, participants will have practical strategies for integrating culturally grounded, decolonizing practices into their own scholarship or community work. Ultimately, this workshop offers Kuwentuhan as a reminder that stories are not merely data; stories are acts of resistance, connection, and transformation that reimagine what research can be when rooted in culture, care, and collective knowing.

## POSTER

**"What Do They Mean By That?": An Exploration of Critical Media Literacy Strategies as a Form of Empowerment in Social Justice Education for Graduate Students of Color in the Digital Post-Truth Era**

Jackeline Granados,  M.A. in Equity, Education and Social Justice Student

The ongoing research explores critical media literacy (CML) as a crucial component of pedagogy for the 21st century. The foundation of CML examines contexts of race, gender, and class within all facets of literature, including the online environment (Lin et al., 2013). This theoretical framework acknowledges the depth and intersectionality within the digital landscape in which discourse is widely accessible by the public. Since the 2016 Trump administration, misinformation and propaganda have flourished in these spaces, primarily targeting minoritized groups and embracing white supremacist ideologies (Burnham & Arbeit, 2023; Lewandowsky et al., 2017). As a result, graduate students of color are left without proper tools to critically examine the accuracy and intentionality of online information. This research will examine the experiences of graduate students of color in online spaces and how implementing CML strategies can be utilized as a form of empowerment and survival in this fractured digital landscape.

## POSTER

**"Where I Fit": Intern Teachers' Sense of Belonging**

Sophie Gallagher, Ed.D. in Educational Leadership Student

In order for PK-12 education leaders to create communities resilient enough to respond to the challenges present in the current climate, we must retain a community of teachers committed to the work of equity. Belonging is a core human need (Maslow, 1954) that has recently been associated with placement experiences for beginning professionals in fields from nursing to teaching (Donlon et al., 2020).

Identified as a mediating factor supporting teacher well-being, a sense of belonging drives teachers' decisions to stay in the profession (Bjorklund et al., 2021; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). When early career teachers (ECT) do not experience a sense of belonging, they are likely to leave the profession (Hanly & Heinz, 2022). The qualitative study described in this poster investigates the question, "How do ECTs conceptualize their experiences of belonging at school?" Belonging was explored and addressed as a manifestation of Community Cultural Wealth among and within ECT (Yosso, 2005).

## POSTER

**Counternarratives of Poetry: Inclusion of BIPOC Queer Poets in Higher Ed. Settings**

Bobbi Evans-Santiago, CSULB Evaluator, Student Records

When we learn of poets in educational settings, we usually see or read about the White heteronormative males (Blake & Snapper, 2022). This poster will share the need for BIPOC queer poetry in high ed. settings and how it can impact students' sense of belonging. Because poetry provides a space for expression by releasing pain and activating healing, this poster will provide a few strategies to implement in the classroom. I will also share many poets to consider sharing with students in various academic settings (advising center, classroom, offices, organizations) through visuals and a QR code to access others not shared on the poster.

## POSTER

**Communication & Collaboration Gaps Between High School Counselors and Higher Education Practitioners**

Michelle Vu, M.S. in Counseling, Student Development in Higher Education Student

This study examined the communication/collaboration gaps between high school counselors and higher education practitioners. Both groups share goals of supporting students' college and career readiness. The conceptual framework guiding this study combined Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth and Lent et al.'s (1994) Social Cognitive Career Theory. Using a qualitative design, data were collected through a demographic questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with two high school counselors and five higher education practitioners.

The study explored participants' concerns regarding students' college readiness, perceptions of existing collaborative efforts, and barriers limiting communication. Data were analyzed using initial and pattern coding to identify key themes. Preliminary findings indicate workload barriers, academic readiness gaps, and lack of cross-sector professional training.

This poster presentation will visually present key preliminary findings and participant perspectives, engaging the audience through guided discussion on practical strategies to strengthen collaboration, improve professional development and training, and enhance support for students.

# POSTER

**AS 1ST FLOOR HALLWAY**

**Reimagining Teacher Preparation: Residency, Partnership, and Sustaining Educators in LBUSD**

Rita Suh, CSULB Lecturer and UTEACH Coordinator, and Lidiana Portales Blair, CSULB Lecturer and Urban Dual Credential Program Coordinator

This session explores how the Long Beach Teacher Residency (LBTR) program reimagines teacher preparation through a year-long residency model grounded in deep partnership between CSULB and the Long Beach Unified School District. Residents in the LBTR program pursue one of two credential pathways: a dual credential in Multiple Subject and Education Specialist, or a Multiple Subject Credential with a Spanish Bilingual Authorization.

Designed to recruit, develop, and sustain diverse future educators, LBTR integrates collaboration and equity-driven coaching to prepare Residents for long-term success. Presenters will share how intentional structures such as High Priority Resident Practices (HPRPs), triad-based mentorship, and professional development build strong foundations while affirming Residents' identities and leadership potential. Participants will engage with first-hand narratives and approaches that demonstrate how district-university partnerships can reimagine traditional teacher preparation and cultivate Residents not just to become teachers, but to stay, lead, and thrive in the communities they serve.

# CAMPUS MAP — SOUTH CAMPUS
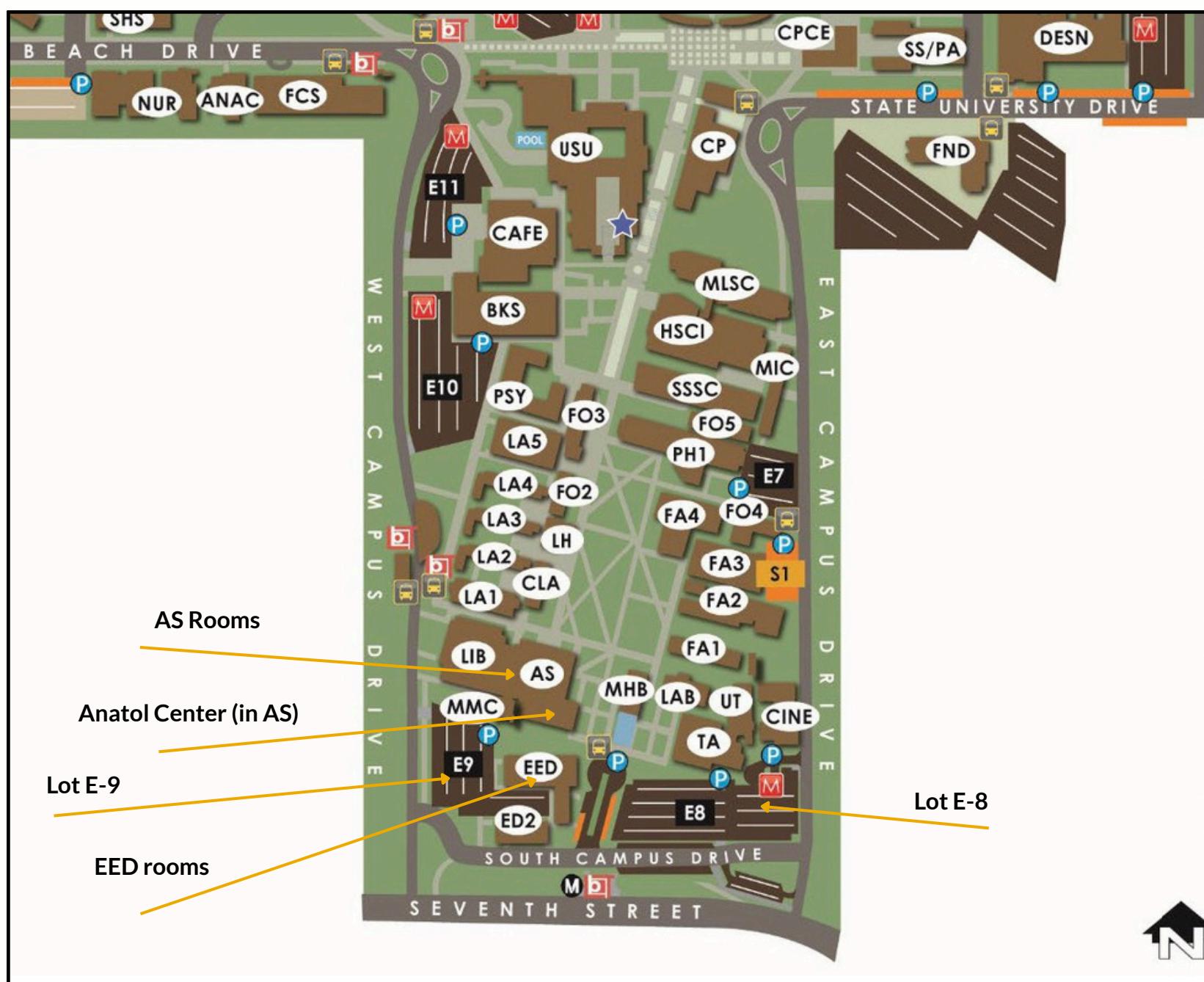
# THANK YOU

Thank you for being part of the 2026 College of Education Leadership Symposium, Centering Community, Justice and Belonging. Your presence, engagement, and willingness to learn alongside one another made this gathering deeply meaningful.

We hope you leave inspired, connected and more committed than ever to advancing justice and nurturing communities where every learner and educator can truly belong.

Thank you for the work you do every day — and for continuing to lead with heart, purpose, and possibility. We look forward to the ways our paths will cross again as we build a more equitable future together.

**Special thanks to:**

**Our sponsor:**
Department of Educational Leadership

**Racial Equity Fellows:**
Johnathon Davis, Sadaf Ashraf, Daniel Esquivel, Porscha Rayon Singh, Michael Pile, Fatima Rosas Huerta and Hilaleh Hamad

**Racial Equity Committee:**
Devery Rodgers, Jonathan O'Brien and Alejandra Priede

**Faculty/Administration:**
Associate Dean Bre Evans-Santiago, Educational Leadership Department Chair Angela Locks

**Staff:**
Kimberly Word, Christine Bedell, Emily Choi, Maya Lancero, Cecilia Fonseca