



Dr. Lily Espinoza

Dr. Lily Espinoza is a trailblazing educator, advocate, and community leader dedicated to empowering students and promoting educational equity. Born and raised in California from a diverse neighborhood, she developed a deep passion for education and social justice from a young age. Espinoza pursued her studies diligently, beginning at Diablo Valley College to earn her Associate's Degree, then to UC Berkeley for her Bachelor's Degree, to Columbia University in New York City for her first Master's Degree and to Cal State University, Fullerton for her doctorate and John F. Kennedy University for a second Master's Degree in 2019.

Driven by her commitment to make a difference, Espinoza embarked on a career in education, where she quickly distinguished herself as a compassionate and innovative educator. Her classroom became a vibrant space for fostering critical thinking, creativity, and inclusivity. She has served as an instructor at Cal State University Fullerton and Mills College.

Beyond the classroom, Espinoza's advocacy work gained prominence as she actively campaigned for policies to address disparities in education access and quality. She engaged with policymakers, community leaders, and fellow educators to promote systemic change and ensure all students have equal opportunities to thrive through her work as interim EOPS Director, Director of the Transfer Center, Director of the Cadena Cultural Center, Director of Career Services and Industry Relations and as Dean and the college Athletic Director.

Espinoza's leadership extends beyond education; she is deeply involved in community initiatives aimed at empowering underprivileged youth and marginalized communities. Through mentorship programs and grassroots efforts, she strives to uplift others and create a more equitable society. She has held positions in the community as Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of a local non-

profit organization, Vice Chair on the city of Benicia Arts and Culture Commission, volunteer for the Solano County Women and Girls Commission, County Fair Board of Directors, Open Government Commission, and as fundraiser for various community based agencies.

With her unwavering dedication and visionary leadership, Lily Espinoza, Ed.D. continues to inspire positive change, leaving a lasting impact on education and social justice.



Dr. Heather French

Dr. Heather French currently serves as Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students at University of California, Merced. In her role she oversees several campus departments that offer services to support students outside of the classroom, and she provides advocacy and direct support to students. Previously Dr. French held Vice President for Student Affairs roles at Fontbonne University and University of Health Sciences and Pharmacy in St. Louis, served as Dean for Student Development and Engagement at Holy Names University, and held various roles in residence life, first year experience and multicultural services within the UC and CSU systems.

Dr. French has been active in NASPA and ACPA and has held several leadership roles within these professional organizations, including serving as NASPA Board Member in Region VI and IV-W, and a member of the NASPA 2024 Annual Conference Leadership Team. She currently serves as NASPA Region VI Northern California Co-Chair and the California Chapter of ACPA (CCPA) Professional Development Chair.

Dr. French received her Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from Saint Mary's College of California, her M.A. in Counseling Psychology from Humboldt State

University and her B.A. in Human Studies from Bradford College. In her spare time, she enjoys baking, reading, writing, travel, Zumba, and spending time with her wife, Angela and their Peralta Community College student, Espy.



Dr. Blas G. Guerrero

Dr. Blas G. Guerrero was born in Monterey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico and raised in Ventura County by farm laborer parents who believed in the power of education and instilled in him the desire to always assist the less fortunate, marginalized, disenfranchised, and under-served individuals in our communities.

Dr. Guerrero received his Undergraduate Degree in psychology from the University of California, San Diego and his Master's Degree and Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley. Dr. Guerrero has done extensive research identifying factors that promote academic success among at-risk students. Dr. Guerrero's research interests include identifying non-cognitive factors that positively influence the academic performance of low-income and first-generation college students.

Dr. Guerrero has worked at various University of California campuses, the University of California Office of the President, a private university, and at various schools within the California Community College system including Los Medanos College and Laney College; he has also done extensive collaborative work with the California State University system. His commitment to students steered him to the classroom at UC Berkeley where he taught Education and Ethnic Studies courses for eighteen years. He was the creator of the intersegmental collaborative initiative known statewide as "Higher Education Week." Dr. Guerrero's programs and initiatives have received numerous state and national

honors including distinguished awards from the *California School Board Association*, the *California County Superintendents Educational Services Association*, as well as *The Education Trust*. He was awarded the University of California, San Diego's Estrella Award for Alumni Excellence.

Dr. Guerrero was the Director of Strategic Diversity Recruitment and Transfer Programs at the University of California, Davis and worked exhaustively on increasing the enrollment and retention of under-represented students. He also served as the Dean of Admission at Samuel Merritt University in Oakland, California. Presently, Dr. Guerrero serves as the Vice President of Educational Partnerships, Services and Programs at a consulting firm. His present assignment is providing leadership and guidance focused on enhancing dual-enrollment programs at Imperial Valley College,

Dr. Guerrero has served on numerous local and statewide boards; he has served as the Chair of the *California American College Test (ACT) Advisory Board*, and presently serves as a *Trustee at De La Salle High School* in Concord, California.

Dr. Blas Guerrero's career exemplifies his steadfast commitment to educational outreach, strategic recruitment, admissions, and student success and retention. Dr. Guerrero has provided visionary, engaging, collaborative, and instrumental leadership at various higher education institutions. His accomplishments in the educational sector demonstrate his unconditional commitment to student success and educational equity for all students. Dr. Guerrero's personal and educational journey mirrors the journey of first-generation students. Colleagues describe Blas as "passionate," "student-centered" and a "visionary" with creative and engaging solutions to complex and critical problems and issues.