

PARTICIPANTS

Roanna Bennie is interim president of Las Positas College in Livermore, California. Since she became interim president in 2017, she has focused on leading the campus facilities planning for the large Measure A bond, increasing campus security measures, and integrating state initiatives into the campus. Previously, she served as the college's vice president of academic affairs. Before moving to Las Positas, she was vice president of instruction at Miramar College in San Diego. She also served as an academic dean at Cuesta College and Allan Hancock College, and as the chief instructional officer for Life Pacific College—a private, independent school. Before moving into administrative work, she taught at public and private four-year institutions and community colleges. She has been a member of several boards and professional organizations, including the Association of California Community College Administrators (ACCCA) and the Community College League of California (CCLC). She holds a master's degree in speech communication from California State University, Northridge, and a bachelor's degree from Montana State University, where she majored in speech.

Marisol Cuellar Mejia is a senior research associate at the PPIC Higher Education Center. Her recent projects have focused on developmental education, the workforce skills gap, online learning in community colleges, and the economic returns to college education. Her research interests include labor markets, business climate, housing, and demographic trends. Before joining PPIC, she worked at Colombia's National Association of Financial Institutions as an economic analyst, concentrating on issues related to the manufacturing sector and small business. She has also conducted agricultural and commodity market research for the Colombian National Federation of Coffee Growers and the National Federation of Palm Oil Growers of Colombia. She holds an MS in agricultural and resource economics from the University of California, Davis.

Deborah Gonzalez is director of government affairs at PPIC. She and her staff work to connect PPIC research with policymakers and community leaders. A longtime Capitol staffer, she served as policy and fiscal director for six legislative leaders and worked on a wide variety of issues—including the state budget, education reform, infrastructure funding, and public safety. She holds a law degree from the McGeorge School of Law, University of the Pacific, and a BA from Claremont McKenna College, where she majored in international relations.

Katie Hern is an English instructor at Chabot College and co-founder of the California Acceleration Project (CAP), a professional development network that supports the efforts of the state's 115 community colleges to transform remediation and increase student completion and equity. She speaks nationally on remediation reform and integrated reading and writing. Her publications focus on rethinking remedial placement; high-challenge, high-support pedagogy in English and math; colleges that have implemented powerful reforms; and the equity imperative of transforming remediation. Along with CAP co-founder Myra Snell, she was chosen by *Washington Monthly* as one of the "16 Most Innovative People in Higher Education" in 2016. Her past roles include serving as co-director of California's Faculty Inquiry Network and as dean of academic affairs at John F. Kennedy University. She began teaching English composition at Bowling Green State University in 1991. She holds a doctorate in educational leadership from Mills College.

Jacob Jackson is a research fellow at the PPIC Higher Education Center. His research includes work on college costs, college readiness, community college participation, access to higher education, and college completion. Before joining PPIC, he was a postdoctoral scholar at the University of California, Davis, and a middle school and high school teacher in Sacramento, California, and Columbia, Missouri. He holds a PhD in education from the University of California, Davis, and a master's degree in education from the University of Missouri.

Laura Metune is vice chancellor of external relations for the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. She oversees a division that represents the chancellor's office before the legislative and executive branches of the state and federal governments. She has an extensive background with state government. Before she joined the Chancellor's Office in 2016, she served as chief consultant for the Assembly Committee on Higher Education. As the California State Assembly's lead higher education policy staffer, she helped write and win passage of landmark legislation related to student consumer protections, financial aid, and other postsecondary issues. In 2016, she was appointed to serve as a member of the Local Control and Accountability Plan Parent Advisory Committee of the Sacramento City Unified School District. In 2012, she was appointed by Governor Brown as the bureau chief for the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education. She transferred from American River College to earn a bachelor's degree in government from California State University, Sacramento.