

Project Principal Investigators

Norma A. Marrun, Project Principal Investigator, 2017-2019

Received her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in Educational Policy Studies. Prior to coming to UNLV, she was a Postdoctoral Associate in the Program in Education at Duke University. Her research interests include Latina/o education, diversity and equity in the K-16 educational pipeline, immigration policies, and culturally responsive pedagogy, with an emphasis on college access and completion. She draws on interdisciplinary perspectives to examine how Latina/o students and their families challenge and resist insidious forms of oppression within their homes, community, and schools. Central to all this work is privileging students' lived experiences, family, and community knowledge. Additionally, she is interested in examining how to recruit and support Students of Color into the teaching profession.

Allison Smith, Project Principal Investigator, 2016-2017, Volunteer Research Specialist, 2017-2019

Received her Ph.D. from UNLV in Teacher Education. She has experience in working with local and international non-profits to design curriculum and create programs to support underrepresented youth. With focus areas in education policy, teacher evaluation, multicultural education, and social justice, she works to provide students whom are becoming teachers a robust experience in their courses that will prepare them to support all or their PK-12 students.

Project Co-Investigators and Partners

Rosnidar Arshad, Project Graduate Assistant, 2017-2018

Is pursuing her Ph.D. from UNLV in Cultural Studies, International Education, and Multicultural Education (CSIEME). She has over twenty years of experience as an elementary and middle school level teacher, and over ten years of experience as a Department Subject Head (Malay Language) Department. During her tenure as Subject Head, students, all racial and linguistic minorities, had a 100% above national average pass rate on national examinations. She has extensive background and research interest in coaching in-service teachers, pedagogy, classroom engagement, writing across the curriculum, and action research. With respect to *Abriendo Caminos/Opening Pathways*, she is committed to the educational success of all students and understands the role of Teachers of Color in promoting excellence in education for Students of Color.

Lisa Bendixen, Volunteer Research Specialist

Received her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her research interests involve epistemic cognition of students and teachers and how these beliefs influence learning, teaching, and teacher education. Currently, she is focusing on epistemic cognition change in the classroom and mixed methodology. Dr. Bendixen has authored an edited book: *Personal Epistemology in the Classroom* and has chapters in the *Handbook of Educational Psychology* and the *Handbook of Epistemic Cognition*. She serves on several editorial boards including *Contemporary Educational Psychology* and she teaches courses in Cognitive Development, Classroom Assessment, and Mixed Methods Research.

Sandra Candell, Project Volunteer

Received her Ph.D. from UNLV in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Cultural Studies, International Education, and Multicultural Education (CSIEME). She is an immigrant, Motherscholar of Color, multicultural educator, and part time instructor in the Department of Interdisciplinary, Ethnic, and Genders Studies (IGES) at UNLV. Her research focuses on the educational trajectories of U.S.-born

transnational students who were forced to attend schools in Mexico due to parental deportation. She is also interested in the importance of deported mothers' advocacy to improve their children's conditions in Mexico. Particularly, Dr. Candel is committed to the academic success of transnational students through the development of transnational-sensitive teaching practices. She is also dedicated to supporting deported mothers by acting as a bridge between them and the Mexican local government in order to enhance their advocacy efforts.

Claudia Chiang-López, Project Graduate Student Intern, 2018-2019

Is pursuing her M.A. from UNLV in Communication Studies. Received her B.A. from UNLV, with a major in Interdisciplinary Studies, and a minor in Sociology, and her A.A. from CSN with concentrations in Spanish and Sociology. She is a proud first-generation immigrant and first-generation college student. Her research interests include multicultural education, examining community- and meaning-making around victimization, and exploring narratives around love and violence; she has presented her research at regional and national conferences. She teaches interpersonal communication courses, and has been a teaching assistant for speech and service learning courses. She serves on various GPSA committees, and is a Grad Rebel Ambassador and an Advantage mentor. She also volunteers as an on-and-off campus advocate for survivors of interpersonal violence, and as a leader with Alternative Breaks—spring break trips that blend service with a curriculum focused on social justice. With Abriendo Caminos/Opening Pathways, she serves as a member of the Valley High School #Love2TeachLV weekly meeting team.

Christine Clark, Project Faculty

Received her Ed.D. from UMASS, Amherst in Multicultural Education. She is a Professor and Senior Scholar for Multicultural Education, and Founding Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion at UNLV. She was a Fulbright Senior Scholar in México and Guatemala, where she conducted research on school and community violence. She serves on the editorial board for *Equity & Excellence in Education* (Routledge), the journal of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, College of Education, *Multicultural Perspectives* (Taylor & Francis), the journal of the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME), and she is the Associate Editor for the Higher Education section of *Multicultural Education* (Caddo Gap Press). Her research focuses on white antiracist identity development, dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline, sociopolitically-located multicultural education, and multicultural organization development, as well as recruiting and retaining Students of Color in teaching in PK-12 and higher education.

Renee J. Dorrity, Project Graduate Student Volunteer, 2017-2018

Will be pursuing a Ph.D. beginning in 2018. Received her M.Ed. from UNLV in Multicultural Education. A high school English teacher, she has spent ten years working as either a teacher, department head, or coach in the Clark County School District as well as at an international school in China. Her research interests are critical literacies, equity pedagogy, and teacher disposition. She is interested in the work of Abriendo Caminos/Opening Pathways, particularly because of its focus on Students of Color and reducing the teacher diversity gap.

José L. Flores, Project Volunteer

Completed Civil Engineering coursework at the University of Nevada, Reno and the University of Sonora, Mexico. Has 30 years of management/supervisory experience in Room Service/Restaurants, including 20 years working in collective bargaining with union employees. As Room Service Manager, Assistant Manager, and Restaurant Manager at Mandalay Bay, Mirage, Hilton, Luxor, Bally's and Rio, he managed staffs of 50-150 in overseeing hospitality sales and special events planning. He is known for his dedication

to supporting customer service- and food safety care-related professional development opportunities for his supervisees. He holds National Restaurant Association ServeSafe (2017) and Step-One Mediation certifications. His volunteerism includes serving as Soccer Coach in Henderson, NV (2014), overseeing food handling at the Latino Youth Leadership Conference (2000-2001), and assisting with event preparations at Nevada Hispanic Services (1993), for the Family Leadership Initiative (2011-2012), and for UNLV's MESA (2017-2018).

Rosemary Q. Flores, Project Family Engagement Specialist

Received her B.A. from UNR in Secondary Education. Is pursuing her M.P.A. at UNLV. She facilitates conversations with Parents of Color in our local Southern Nevada community to learn more about how to increase their access to higher education, as well as their children's access. She has over twenty years of community organizing experience in the non-profit sector, and as a consultant working with youth and families. She is working to extend UNLV's Family Network into the Abriendo Caminos/Opening Pathways partner high schools by identify Students/Parents of Color who are passionate about teaching and whose family assets that will propel their success in the field.

Monica Hernández-Johnson, #Love2TeachLV School Lead

Is pursuing her Ph.D. from UNLV in Cultural Studies, International Education, and Multicultural Education (CSIEME). A proud Central American, her research primarily focuses on Latinas' experience in higher education using standpoint theory through the constructs of borderlands and minoritization. Her research relies on the extensive use of testimonios as a way to bring forward new perspectives in inquiry and to challenge Western epistemological frameworks which have ignored or silenced marginalized voices. Her research prioritizes the centering of these voices, which is what drew her to the Abriendo Caminos/Opening Pathways project. A student-centered project, it draws on the funds of knowledge that students, parents, and teachers have to find solutions to close the diversity gap and fill the shortage of educators in the teaching workforce.

Silvina Jover, Project Graduate Student Intern, 2018-2019

Is pursuing her Ph. D. from UNLV in Cultural Studies, International Education, and Multicultural Education (CSIEME). She is a third-year bilingual (Spanish/English) Secondary U.S. History and Government teacher with the Clark County School District in Las Vegas, Nevada. Previously she taught linguistically and culturally diverse, primarily Latinx students in Mississippi's Gulf Coast. Prior to becoming a teacher, she worked as an independent linguist (for seven years), and in the creative and digital advertising fields (for three years)—she draws on unique skills learned in these fields in her teaching. Her goal is to create a secondary school “academy” that affirms bi- and multilingual students' language skills as intercultural assets (not deficits) in supporting these students to pursue careers in the translation, interpretation, and language teaching and learning industries.

Norma E. Juárez, Project Parent Outreach Coordinator

Is pursuing her Associate of Business Degree from CSN in Accounting and Finance. She facilitates relationship building with parents at the projects partner high schools to identify Students/Parents of Color who might be interested in the teaching field. As a parent returning to school herself, she has first-hand knowledge about navigating educational systems. In particular, she knows that family engagement is critical to student achievement, especially when students are also parents. She has seven years of experience working with families through Southern Nevada's community-based Family Leadership Initiative and

FLY-Zone. Through Abriendo Caminos/Opening Pathways, she wants to assist families and educators to close the diversity gap in the education system through parent engagement.

Lashaun Limbrick, #Love2TeachLV School Lead

Is pursuing his Ph.D. from UNLV in Cultural Studies, International Education, and Multicultural Education (CSIEME). He is a School Guidance Counselor in one of the Abriendo Caminos/Opening Pathways partner high schools and a member of that school's #Love2TeachLV weekly meeting team. His research interests focus on dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline, especially for African American male youth, in part through diversification of the PK-12 teacher and counselor pipeline.

De'Ana Mauldin, #Love2TeachLV School Lead

Is pursuing her Ph.D. from UNLV in Cultural Studies, International Education, and Multicultural Education (CSIEME). She is an Elementary School Educator and private tutor. Her research interests are in multicultural education and inner-city Students of Color. She spent four years teaching in the Clark County School District in Las Vegas, and five years working on the campaigns of state and national elected leaders who are educational advocates. As a future professor or educational policymaker, she will prioritize the educational success of people from her cultural community as well as those from marginalized groups. She was drawn to the work of Abriendo Caminos/Opening Pathways because of its relationship to her previous academic and professional endeavors. She is committed to the recruitment of Students of Color into the teaching field in order to fill the diversity gap among local teachers.

Yvonne Morris, #Love2TeachLV Program Coordinator

Is pursuing her Ph.D. from UNLV in Cultural Studies, International Education, and Multicultural Education (CSIEME). She is the Academic Coordinator and Advisor with the NSC TRiO Upward Bound Programs, a role which she leverages to support her work with the Abriendo Caminos/Opening Pathways project. Her research focuses on the relationship between activist-oriented social media use by Youth of Color and their concurrent and/or subsequent activism to promote social change in schools and communities. She is particularly interested in the roles of Black women in youth-focused social media-driven social change.

Temi Odutola, Project Graduate Assistant, 2017-2018

Is pursuing her Ph.D. from UNLV in Cultural Studies, International Education, and Multicultural Education (CSIEME). She is a Social Worker and Film and Theater Producer. Her area of research interest is in promoting educational access and success through Critical Theater. She has extensive experience working with communities, especially African American communities, around educational and social justice, advocacy and awareness, and film and theater production, which is what drew her to the work of the Abriendo Caminos/Opening Pathways project. For more than ten years she worked to bring awareness about, and to reduce and prevent transmission of HIV/AIDS at Drexel University College of Medicine. For almost twenty years, she has been a spiritual educator, teacher, and guide in African Spirituality.

Tara J. Plachowski, Volunteer Research Specialist

Is pursuing her Ph.D. from UNLV in Teacher Education. Her research interests are in multicultural teacher education, mentoring, school climate, and the effects of race and hierarchy on teacher education. She spent twelve years as a teacher, administrator, and coach in PK-12 public schools in Los Angeles, and serves as a consultant and coach for schools in Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and elsewhere seeking curricular and organizational change centered on students and families. She was drawn to the work of Abriendo

Caminos/Opening Pathways due to its critical focus on the teacher diversity gap, teacher recruitment, and teacher education.

Fereshteh Rezaeian, Project Volunteer, 2018

Is pursuing her Ph.D from UNLV in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Cultural Studies, International Education, and Multicultural Education (CSIEME). She is an immigrant, Motherscholar of Color, and her research focuses on the impacts of acculturation patterns on immigrants' success in higher education. Her goal is to help Students of Color succeed in higher education. She has over twenty years of experience in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) in Iran, Canada, and the United States. With respect to Abriendo Camino/Opening Pathways, she is committed to raising awareness among teachers and Parents of Color relative to their roles in promoting excellence in education for Students of Color. She is also committed to raising public awareness about the role of multilingual and critical multicultural education in eliminating the academic achievement gap between students from different racial/ethnic communities.

Ravijot Singh, #Love2TeachLV School Lead

Received her Ph.D. from UNLV in Cultural Studies, International Education, and Multicultural Education (CSIEME). She is a multicultural educator and a social justice advocate. Her research interests include postcolonial thought, teacher' language dispositions, linguistically diverse learners, and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. She strives to facilitate better understanding of culturally appropriate pedagogical practices and multicultural education among teachers to improve educational outcomes for linguistically and culturally diverse students learning in a changing educational context. She has taught internationally and didactically, but became involved with Abriendo Caminos/Opening Pathways because of its dedication to work locally and collaboratively with students, families, and school personnel to create access for Southern Nevada's high school and college Students of Color to become teachers, and to incentivize their interest in a long-term teaching career.

Askia Talib-deen, Project Graduate Assistant, 2018-2019

Is pursuing his Ph.D. from UNLV in Cultural Studies, International Education, and Multicultural Education (CSIEME). In 2016, he completed his M.A. in English at UNLV in English with an emphasis in British and African American Literature. He is an adjunct English Composition professor for the College of Southern Nevada (CSN). His doctoral research uses (auto)ethnography as situated social context self-narrative to trouble his personal journey through Islam and through formal higher education as a Muslim in seeking to examine the experiences of Blackamerican Muslims who have opted out of formal higher education.

Valerie Taylor, Pre-Service Teacher Coordinator

Received her Ed.D. from Northeastern University in Education Organizational Leadership and Communication. She is an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Interdisciplinary, Ethnic, and Genders Studies (IGES) at UNLV. She has both academic (M.P.A.) and professional background in community outreach, governmental affairs, media relations, and additional advance coursework in political science. Her research focuses on the impact professional leadership programs on the civic and political participation of Women of Color. She is particularly committed to the academic success of Students of Color, ensuring their progression through PK-12 and higher education.