**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

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**

**Rosnidar Arshad**, Project Graduate Assistant

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/Open 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.

**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

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.

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, Project Administrative and Field Coordinator

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.

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, Project Graduate Student Intern

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, Project Graduate Student Intern

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, Project Graduate Student Intern

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

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, Project Mentoring and Coaching Coordinator

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.

Ravijot Singh, Project Administrative and Field Coordinator

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.

Valerie Taylor, Project Media and Event 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.