

2023  
Doctoral  
Commencement  
Ceremony

May 10th | 3:00 p.m.

**USC**Rossier  
School of Education





# USC ROSSIER SCHOOL OF EDUCATION 2023 DOCTORAL COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

Processional	<b>Flag and Banner Bearers</b> <b>Taylor Danielle Enoch-Stevens</b> <i>Doctor of Philosophy Candidate</i> <b>Aristotle P. Mosier</b> <i>Doctor of Education, Organizational Change and Leadership Candidate</i>
Welcome	<b>Pedro A. Noguera</b> <i>Distinguished Professor of Education Emery Stoops and Joyce King Stoops Dean</i>
Presentation of Dissertation Awards	<b>Kathy Stowe</b> <i>Associate Dean for Academic Programs Professor of Clinical Education</i>
History of Academic Regalia	<b>Gale M. Sinatra</b> <i>Stephen H. Crocker Professor of Education Associate Dean for Research Professor of Psychology</i>
Commencement Address	<b>Natalia Molina</b> <i>Distinguished Professor of American Studies and Ethnicity USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences</i>
Hooding of Doctoral Candidates	<b>Doctor of Philosophy</b> <b>Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership</b> <b>Doctor of Education, Global Executive</b> <b>Doctor of Education, Organizational Change and Leadership</b>
Concluding Remarks	<b>Pedro A. Noguera</b> <i>Distinguished Professor of Education Emery Stoops and Joyce King Stoops Dean</i>

A reception for graduates and guests will be held  
immediately following the ceremony on Pardee Way Lawn.

# 2022-2023 BOARD OF COUNCILORS

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## MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Today, the USC Rossier School of Education gathers to salute you, the Class of 2023.

When you cross the stage today it will signify your completion of a major milestone; a journey that has been filled with long hours of writing and research, challenges, frustrations, and hopefully, some joy. Your determination and perseverance are a major accomplishment, and I hope it will allow you the opportunity to celebrate, and later, get some rest.

This is not just a great day for you and your families, it's a great day for the USC Rossier community. As a school we take great pride in the classroom teachers, counselors, administrators, leaders, researchers and learning officers who received their education and training at USC Rossier and who have the knowledge and skills to contribute to creating a better future.

The effort to advance equity in our respective fields is at the core of the USC Rossier mission. That is what attracted many of you to our school. As you leave us to make your professional contribution, we hope and expect that you are better equipped to improve student outcomes, and to enhance the civic life of this nation. The quality of our lives and our democracy is now under threat as we face growing inequality, deep political polarization, climate change and serious concerns about safety. Yet, at a moment when some would seek to silence needed conversations about diversity and belonging, you are prepared to engage and invigorate the discussion. At a time when books that portray an inclusive society are being banned along with those that illuminate how racism, homophobia and other prejudices have haunted American history, you are prepared to counter bigotry, ignorance and intolerance. Our expectation is that you will be ready to find ways to advance equity and opportunity, particularly in communities that have been marginalized, and that you will find ways to serve all constituencies in the organizations you work with, regardless of background or need.

We hope that in your time at USC Rossier, you have seen how education can help us address the great challenges of our time. Now, as you move into your new roles, you will discover new ways in which you can make a difference, both in the lives of individuals and institutions. We encourage you not to be afraid to ask hard questions, to rigorously evaluate the evidence, and find collaborators who, like you, are problem solvers and looking for ways to find innovative solutions to the challenges we face. Undoubtedly, you will have difficult moments in your professional and life journey, but you are now a member of the Trojan Family, and you should know that you are never alone on that journey.

As you prepare to move on, we hope you will stay connected to the USC Rossier community. As your dean, it has been a pleasure to see our school flourish despite the challenges facing our society. I wish each of you good health, courage and the very best in all that you do. All of us at USC Rossier pledge our unwavering support as you take on the next challenges in your life and career.

Fight On!

**Pedro A. Noguera, PhD**

*Distinguished Professor of Education*

*Emery Stoops and Joyce King Stoops Dean*

## 2023 COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER



### Natalia Molina

*Distinguished Professor of American Studies and Ethnicity  
USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences*

Professor Molina's research explores the interconnected histories of race, place, gender, culture and citizenship. She is the author of three award-winning books, *How Race Is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* and *Fit to Be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1940*. Her most recent book is *A Place at the Nayarit: How a Mexican Restaurant Nourished a Community*, on immigrant workers as placemakers—including her grandmother—who nurtured and fed the community through the restaurants they established, which served as urban anchors. She co-edited *Relational Formations of Race: Theory, Method and Practice*, and is now at work on a new book, *The Silent Hands that Shaped the Huntington: A History of Its Mexican Workers*. In addition to publishing widely in scholarly journals, she has also written for the *LA Times*, *Washington Post*, *San Diego Union-Tribune*, and more. Professor Molina is a 2020 MacArthur Fellow.

Professor Molina is also proud of her efforts to advance diversity in higher education. At the University of California, San Diego, she served as the associate vice chancellor for faculty diversity and equity and as the associate dean for arts and humanities; her work was recognized by *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*. She was also director of the University of California Education Abroad Program in Spain and a member of the Faculty Advisory Committee for the University of California's President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program. She served a six-year term on the board of California Humanities, a non-profit partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and currently serves on several boards, including those of the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens and the Scholars Council for the Library of Congress.

Professor Molina's work has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities as well as the Ford, Mellon, and Rockefeller Foundations. A distinguished lecturer for the Organization of American Historians and an elected member of the Society of American Historians, she has given lectures in Latin America, Asia, Europe, as well as over 30 of the 50 United States. In 2018, she was the Organization of American Historians China Residency scholar. A certified mediator, she enjoys opportunities for intellectual and cultural exchange, whether in the classroom, lecture hall or over a restaurant table.

# CONGRATULATIONS FROM YOUR GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRS



**Christopher Emdin**  
Professor of Education  
Co-Chair, PhD Governance Committee



**Royel M. Johnson**  
Associate Professor of Higher Education  
Co-Chair, PhD Governance Committee

*Congratulations on reaching this important milestone in your academic journey! Fulfilling the requirements for a PhD requires considerable effort, dedication and discipline—qualities that you have clearly demonstrated. We trust that you will apply what you learned at USC Rossier within your professional spheres of influence to advance educational equity. Take some time to soak this moment in and truly celebrate what you have accomplished, as none of us take lightly what it means to achieve what you have in this current moment. Fight On!*



**Cathy Krop**  
Associate Professor of Clinical Education  
Chair, Educational Leadership Governance Committee

*Congratulations on reaching this incredible milestone! We know that you have worked hard to reach this day. You have accomplished a great deal here at USC Rossier, on your own, with us and with your peers, and with many others who have supported and inspired you along the way. Now that you are at the end of this journey, you are at the beginning of the next one. We do not merely hope that you will take what you have learned here and use it to address historically entrenched inequities in your workplaces and to take on new challenges that will improve teaching and learning in K-12, higher education and beyond. We know you will do these things. We believe in you. Be adventurous, courageous and change the world. And we will be with you as you continue forward.*



**Mark Power Robison**  
Professor of Clinical Education and History  
Chair, Global Executive EdD Governance Committee

*Congratulations graduates! On behalf of your faculty, I am honored to congratulate you on earning the title of Doctor of Education. Your perseverance, creativity and dedication to educational excellence inspires everyone around you. You achieved this great distinction during a period of unprecedented dislocation in education, and despite great disruption to global travel. Throughout your 25 months in the program you enriched each other intellectually and encouraged one another through every stage of this journey. Today we celebrate your accomplishments. This degree attests to the depth of your knowledge as global educational leaders and your great promise as agents of positive change. We look forward to the innovations you will bring to communities around the world. Keep envisioning the brightest possible future, and **Fight On!***



**Courtney L. Malloy**  
Professor of Clinical Education  
Chair, Organizational Change and Leadership Governance Committee

*Congratulations OCL graduates! On behalf of the faculty, I am honored to congratulate you on achieving this significant milestone. Your hard work and perseverance have brought you to this moment, and I am excited to be celebrating with you and your loved ones today. In many ways, the culmination of your doctoral program is not an end, but rather a beginning. You have spent countless hours studying the theories and practices of organizational change and leadership. Now, it is the time to take that knowledge and put it into action by creating meaningful change in your workplaces and communities. We look forward to the many positive impacts you will make on the lives of others. Once again, I offer my heartfelt congratulations. Fight On!*

2023 DISSERTATION OF DISTINCTION  
*Doctor of Philosophy*

THERESA ELPIDIA HERNANDEZ

*Participation in Higher Education Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Work:  
A Relational Intersectionality of Organizations Analysis*

This embedded case study explored how participation in higher education diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives funded by the National Science Foundation's INCLUDES program manifested or impeded organizational change for intersectional equity. The study focused on the experiences of Black, Latina, and Asian American practitioners in diverse roles, including faculty and staff. Hernandez conducted 23 interviews and 41 hours of in-person observations with the Diversifying Higher Education project plus 12 interviews that purposefully sampled women of color across eight other INCLUDES-funded projects. This study found that racist and patriarchal dynamics in project organization, including communications, role ambiguity, and division of labor, perpetuated racialized-gendered disempowerment of women of color practitioners. However, shared leadership through practices of collaborative decision-making, sponsorship, and accountability benefited these practitioners and their projects. This study highlights the importance of respect and trust in how DEI labor is developed and implemented to create change in higher education.

Dissertation Chair: Julie R. Posselt

*Hernandez is currently a Postdoctoral Research Assistant at Northern Arizona University.*



2023 DISSERTATION OF DISTINCTION  
*Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership*

CHRISTEN MICHELLE JOHNSON

*And Yet, Still, They Rise: A Qualitative Study on the Persistence of  
Black Undergraduate Women at a Predominantly White Institution*

Understanding Black female college students' experiences and what influences their persistence in higher education requires a need to center Black female college students in research, policy, and practice. Black women have continued to vastly outnumber Black men with higher enrollment in institutions of higher education. They have intersectional gender and racial experiences and face inhibitors at PWIs that could disrupt their persistence along their academic journey. This qualitative research study aimed to explore how Black women use their cultural capital as a resource to persist and overcome adversity while attending a predominantly White institution. The themes identified were campus climate, invisibility, and community, all inhibitors of persistence for Black women attending a PWI. This study used the theoretical frameworks of Black feminist thought (1991) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) to examine their experiences and persistence efforts. Practical recommendations of these findings and implications for leadership in higher education were discussed.

Dissertation Chair: Patricia Tobey

*Johnson is the director of graduate business student engagement at Loyola Marymount University. She works with graduate business students in the College of Business Administration, where she creates co-curricular and engagement opportunities across eight graduate programs.*

2023 DISSERTATION OF DISTINCTION  
*Doctor of Education,*  
*Organizational Change and Leadership*

TERRENCE CHANDLER-HARRISON

*Sacred Sexism: Uncovering Patriarchy in Black Church Leadership*

This research aimed to explore the role of patriarchy in the disproportionately low rate of Black women leaders in predominantly African American Christian churches. This study examined the Black church through the lens of 12 Black clergywomen to understand the history, beliefs, influences, and structures that may disproportionately prevent Black women from obtaining top leadership positions. The use of a gender role and intersectionality theoretical framework revealed discrepancies between men and women in Black church leadership, highlighted the barriers that many Black women face in obtaining top leadership roles, and featured the circumvented methods by which Black women are forced to engage in order to function as leaders in many Black churches.

Dissertation Chair: Paula M. Carbone

*Chandler-Harrison is a professor and dean at American Baptist College in Nashville, TN. He also leads The Liberty Church in Clarksville, Tenn., where he works to create more equitable spaces for historically marginalized persons.*

2023 DISSERTATION OF DISTINCTION  
*Doctor of Education,*  
*Organizational Change and Leadership*

AMANDA MATHEW JOHNSTON

*Low Retention of Active Duty Female Marine Corps Officers*

The purpose of this mixed-method study was to examine the factors associated with a female Marine officer's decision to voluntarily leave the Marine Corps after their contractual obligation expires. This study's conceptual framework utilized social cognitive theory with a key focus on the cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors that influence one's human agency factors and self-efficacy. A multi-method research design was constructed through use of surveys and one-to-one interviews. The results and findings revealed that three themes, ordered by precedence, reflected the highest influence for female officers to depart active duty military: organizational culture with sub-themes of poor leadership, sexism/sexual harassment, and Marine 24/7 mentality; family with sub-themes of planning to have a child, time with a child, and dual-military marriage; and work schedule with sub-themes of long work hours and family impact. Three evidence-based recommendations to address the findings include: reduce gender bias through gender diversity training and education programs, establish a comprehensive child care program that supports active duty parents, and reduce excessive overwork through establishment of work schedule expectations.

Dissertation Chair: Jennifer L. Phillips

*Johnston is now an organizational development consultant, where she continues to pursue comprehensive retention initiatives as a key strategic advisor for J.B. Hunt Transport Services.*

2023 DISSERTATION OF DISTINCTION  
*Doctor of Education,*  
*Organizational Change and Leadership*

TAKU TAIRA

*The Role of Race and Racism in Black Male Medical Students' Specialty Selection Process*

There are multiple forms of racialization in medicine. Although there is increasing recognition of the problem racial and ethnic underrepresentation in medicine, there is an underrecognized parallel racialized distribution of minoritized students. Minoritized students are more likely to pursue training in the primary care fields that are not only the least competitive fields but also have the lowest salaries. This qualitative study investigated the role of race and racism in Black male medical student's specialty choices. This study revealed both a racialized push for Black men to pursue primary care as well as racialized barriers to pursue the most competitive fields. This study not only increases our understanding of Black male medical students' experiences, but it also uncovered potential points of intervention to increase equity.

Dissertation Chair: Kim Hirabayashi

*Taira is currently an associate professor in the Department of Emergency Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. He plans to continue his research in identifying and eliminating sources of systemic racism in medical education.*





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