

2023  
Master's  
Commencement  
Ceremony

May 12th | 3:45 p.m.

**USC**Rossier  
School of Education





# USC ROSSIER SCHOOL OF EDUCATION 2023 MASTER'S COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

Processional	<b>Flag and Banner Bearers</b> <b>Xitlali Avila</b> <i>Master of Education, School Counseling Candidate</i> <b>Nancy Nguyen</b> <i>Masters of Arts in Teaching Candidate</i>
Welcome	<b>Pedro A. Noguera</b> <i>Distinguished Professor of Education</i> <i>Emery Stoops and Joyce King Stoops Dean</i>
Student Address	<b>Tiffany Robinson</b> <i>Master of Education, School Counseling Candidate</i>
Commencement Address	<b>Ruha Benjamin</b> <i>Professor of African American Studies, Princeton University</i> <i>Founding Director of the Ida B. Wells Just Data Lab</i>
Conferring Degrees	<b>Master of Education</b> <i>Educational Counseling</i> <i>Enrollment Management and Policy</i> <i>Learning Design and Technology</i> <i>Postsecondary Administration and Student Affairs</i> <i>School Counseling</i> <b>Master of Arts</b> <i>Urban Education</i> <i>Teaching</i> <i>Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages</i> <i>Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, World Masters in Language Teaching</i> <b>Master of Science</b> <i>Marriage and Family Therapy</i>
Concluding Remarks	<b>Pedro A. Noguera</b> <i>Distinguished Professor of Education</i> <i>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

Reveta Franklin Bowers, Chair

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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 STUDENT SPEAKER



### **Tiffany Robinson**

*Master of Education, School Counseling Candidate*

Tiffany Danielle Robinson was born in Prince George's County, Md. as the only girl and youngest of three siblings. At a young age, her passion for education and service to others has been at the forefront of her mind. Throughout her educational journey, she discovered that her dedication and purpose can align. While attending the illustrious Howard University, she was inspired by the legends that came before her. After obtaining her undergraduate degree, she taught middle school science for five years working as an education lead, curating curriculum and counseling within group homes. Currently, she mentors and educates youth through the non-profit organization Sharefest Community Development. Her ingrained passion led her to her master's degree in School Counseling from the USC Rossier School of Education. She doesn't plan to stop there. Tiffany will continue to be an agent of change in the community and looks forward to pursuing her PhD in education policy this upcoming fall.

## 2023 COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER



### Ruha Benjamin

*Professor of African American Studies at Princeton University  
Founding Director of the Ida B. Wells Just Data Lab*

Ruha Benjamin is professor of African American Studies at Princeton University, founding director of the Ida B. Wells Just Data Lab, author of the award-winning book *Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code* (2019) and *Viral Justice: How We Grow the World We Want* (2022), 2023 winner of the Stowe Prize, among many other publications. Her work investigates the social dimensions of science, medicine and technology with a focus on the relationship between innovation and inequity, health and justice, knowledge and power.

Ruha earned her BA in sociology and anthropology from Spelman College, MA and PhD in sociology from UC Berkeley, and completed postdoctoral fellowships at UCLA's Institute for Society & Genetics and Harvard's Science, Technology & Society Program. She is the recipient of numerous awards and fellowships including from the American Council of Learned Societies, National Science Foundation, Marguerite Casey Foundation Freedom Scholar Award and the President's Award for Distinguished Teaching at Princeton.

Her work is published in numerous journals, including *Science, Technology, and Human Values; Policy & Society; Ethnicity & Health;* and the *Annals of the American Academy of Social and Political Science* and reported on in national and international news outlets, including NBC News, *Fast Company, WIRED, Slate Magazine, CBC, CNET, The Guardian, National Geographic,* and *Nature.*

# CONGRATULATIONS FROM YOUR PROGRAM CHAIRS



## Helena Seli

Professor of Clinical Education  
Faculty Program Chair for the Master's Programs

*As faculty and staff of the Master's Program Office, we are excited to join in your celebration as you transition into your chosen professional spaces. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to support your growth as scholar-practitioners and are confident that you will create positive impacts in schools, colleges, universities, clinical and other settings throughout the world. We look forward to staying in touch as you put all that you have learned into action and advance educational equity for the communities you serve. As always, **Fight On!***



## Robert A. Filback

Professor of Clinical Education  
Chair, MAT-TESOL Program Committee

*Congratulations! Today marks such a significant accomplishment! I encourage you to take a few moments to pause, reflect, and appreciate what you have achieved. Some of you are entering the field for the first time, others are mid-career; some of you left friends and loved ones to study here in L.A., while others completed some or all courses online. Despite your varied paths, you can now enjoy your shared identity as proud graduates of the Rossier MAT-TESOL program and members of the Trojan Family! As you reflect on this moment, consider the Five Traits of a Trojan: Faithful, Scholarly, Skillful, Courageous and Ambitious. May these ideals guide and inspire you as you continue on in your professional journey. **Fight On!***



## Fred W. Freking

Professor of Clinical Education  
Chair, MAT Program Committee

*Congratulations to the graduates of the MAT program! We, as faculty and staff of the program, have enjoyed working alongside you and watching you develop into the educators that we know will make a long-lasting impact in the field. It is an honor to be here with you today and see your hard work being recognized. The countless hours in the field, the long nights of classes and never-ending planning have prepared you to take on the challenge of educating the next generation of scholars, leaders and innovators. Teaching is a lifelong journey of learning alongside your students and the school community. Enjoy the journey, reach out to others when you are challenged, celebrate the moments of joy with your students and remember, we are a Trojan Family and will be here when you need us. **Fight On!***







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