

2024
Doctoral
Commencement
Ceremony

May 8th | 3:00 p.m.

USC Rossier
School of Education



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USC ROSSIER SCHOOL OF EDUCATION 2024 DOCTORAL COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

Processional	Flag and Banner Bearers Maritza Elizabeth Salazar <i>Doctor of Philosophy, Urban Education Policy Candidate</i> Geni Maria Cobb <i>Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership</i>
Welcome	Pedro A. Noguera <i>Distinguished Professor of Education</i> <i>Emery Stoops and Joyce King Stoops Dean</i>
History of Academic Regalia	Lawrence O. Picus <i>Richard T. Cooper and Mary Catherine Cooper</i> <i>Chair in Public School Administration</i> <i>Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs</i> <i>Professor of Education Finance and Policy</i>
Presentation of Dissertation Awards	Kathy Stowe <i>Associate Dean for Academic Programs</i> <i>Professor of Clinical Education</i>
Commencement Address	Shaun R. Harper <i>Clifford and Betty Allen Chair in Urban Leadership</i> <i>University Professor and Provost Professor, USC</i> <i>Founder and Executive Director, USC Race and Equity Center</i>
Hooding of Doctoral Candidates	Doctor of Philosophy, Education Doctor of Philosophy, Urban Education Policy Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership Doctor of Education, Global Executive Doctor of Education, Organizational Change and Leadership
Concluding Remarks	Pedro A. Noguera <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 West Leavey Lawn.

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Welcome to our graduates, friends, family and alumni. Today, the USC Rossier School of Education celebrates the Class of 2024.

When you cross the stage today, it will signify a tremendous accomplishment. After countless hours of research, writing and studying, you have achieved your goal of graduating as professionals from USC Rossier. Through hard work and perseverance, you have earned this honor. Today we celebrate your achievement and look forward to seeing the positive contributions to our society.

The word commencement literally means beginning. I want you to think about that for a moment. While your studies at USC Rossier have concluded, you are now beginning a new chapter of life. With your new degrees you are now prepared to take on new responsibilities and challenges. This is an exciting time, and I hope that you feel a sense of joyful anticipation for what lies ahead. Whatever you decide to pursue next, we want you to know that you will always have the support and partnership of your fellow Trojans. We are here to help you realize your professional aspirations and make a positive difference in the field of education and beyond.

The cornerstone of USC Rossier's mission is to prepare leaders to advance educational equity through practice, research, service and policy. You have already displayed the exceptional drive and discipline necessary to realize this vision. Some of you worked full time while earning your degree. Now, as you embark on the next chapter of your career, we hope you feel well-equipped to dismantle the barriers that prevent others from receiving a quality education. I am confident that each of you will do what you can to make this a more just and equitable nation.

As Americans, we are grappling with the effects of political polarization, structural inequality, climate change and misinformation. As educators, you play a foundational role in addressing these threats to our democracy. As USC Rossier graduates, you are equipped to lead the difficult conversations and develop the reforms that will help us meet these challenges head-on.

We are also living in a moment when diversity, equity and inclusion practices are under attack. Under the guise of color-blindness, some are arguing that we should ignore past and current forms of injustice. These are difficult times, and no one knows what the future holds. However, it is important to remember that this is just a moment, and the pendulum swings in both directions. Regardless of the current opposition, with every generation, our nation grows more diverse, and diversity has always been a source of strength for our nation. By advancing equity and opportunity, particularly in historically marginalized communities, you will help clear a path to a future in which every student has the skills and knowledge not only to succeed in

life, but to contribute to the health of our democracy. We are confident that you will find ways to serve all constituencies in the organizations you work with, regardless of background or need.

Once you leave here, there will undoubtedly be challenges you will face. That is the nature of life. However, you have already demonstrated that you are capable of overcoming obstacles and rising to meet challenges with equanimity and grace. We encourage you to use your intellect, to never be afraid to ask rigorous questions, and to seek meaningful partnerships and collaborations with those who share your values. We know that you will stand up for what you believe in.

Please stay engaged in the USC Rossier community. You are now a member of the Trojan Family, so you will never be alone in this journey. We will support you every step of the way as you seek innovative solutions to our most pressing issues.

On behalf of USC Rossier's faculty, staff and alumni, I wish you good health, success and happiness in all your professional endeavors. You came to USC Rossier because you want to make a difference. We can't wait to see all that you accomplish in the years ahead as together we work to use education as a resource to address the complex challenges of our times.

Fight On!

Pedro A. Noguera, PhD

Distinguished Professor of Education

Emery Stoops and Joyce King Stoops Dean

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2024 COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER



Shaun R. Harper

Clifford and Betty Allen Chair in Urban Leadership

University Professor and Provost Professor, USC

Founder and Executive Director, USC Race and Equity Center

Shaun Harper is a Provost Professor here at the USC Rossier School of Education, where he holds the Clifford and Betty Allen Chair in Urban Leadership. In 2022, he was appointed University Professor, a distinction bestowed only to 30 of 4,700 USC full-time faculty members. Professor Harper also is founder and executive director of the USC Race and Equity Center, a past president of the Association for the Study of Higher Education and a past president of the American Educational Research Association. He was inducted into the National Academy of Education in 2021.

A prolific public intellectual, more than 3 million people have read the 125 articles that Harper has authored for the Washington Post, Forbes, Los Angeles Times, Rolling Stone and other widely read newspapers and magazines. In addition, he has published 12 books and over 100 academic papers. This July, Harvard Education Press is publishing his newest book, *The Big Lie About Race in America's Schools*.

Professor Harper's research has been cited in over 23,000 published studies across a vast array of disciplines, in multiple amicus briefs submitted to the U.S. Supreme Court and on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. Additionally, he has procured more than \$37 million in grants and contracts for the USC Race and Equity Center. The Los Angeles Unified School District, New York City Department of Education, Princeton University, United States Air Force, Nike, T-Mobile, Google, Microsoft, Major League Baseball and the National Football League are among the more than 400 institutions and organizations with which he has worked.

The New York Times, *Wall Street Journal*, *Sports Illustrated*, *The Atlantic*, and several hundred other news outlets have quoted Harper and featured his research. He has been interviewed on CNN, MSNBC, ESPN, NPR and the "Dr. Phil Show." The recipient of dozens of top awards in his fields and five honorary degrees, Professor Harper was ranked our nation's 4th most influential professor in *Education Week* for 2023.

CONGRATULATIONS FROM YOUR GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRS



Royel M. Johnson

Associate Professor of Higher Education
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

On behalf of our EDL community: Congratulations, graduates! Today is one of great celebration. You have worked hard to reach this day, and you inspire us and everyone around you. As you complete your doctoral journey, you are at the beginning of a new one. We know you will take what you have learned and use your leadership to address historically entrenched inequities, creating new opportunities and visionary thinking to improve teaching and learning in schools, colleges and universities, and other educational organizations. We believe in you. Be adventurous, courageous and change the world. We, together with all those who embrace and surround you today, will be with you as you continue forward. Fight On!



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. 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!

2024 DISSERTATION OF DISTINCTION
Doctor of Philosophy, Urban Education Policy

JEANETTE ZAMBRANO

*Culturally-Relevant, Autonomy Supportive Instruction: Toward an Integration for
Enhancing the Motivation of Racially and Ethnically Diverse Learners*

According to motivation science, if teachers want to engage their students in academic tasks, they should support their students' need for autonomy by implementing instructional practices such as providing students with opportunities to make choices and being open to student questions. However, Jeanette was curious if this practices could be "race-reimagined," or re-conceptualized using sociocultural perspectives in order to support the autonomy and empowerment of students of color in education. Professor Zambrano re-conceptualized the traditional practices, created new scales to measure these, engaged in interviews with student to validate the scales, and implemented a survey in several local colleges. Results showed that these race-reimagined practices were related to a variety of motivational outcomes for students from diverse backgrounds, over and above the traditional practices. This work is in line with current efforts in educational psychology to make learning contexts supportive of racially and culturally diverse students' needs and assets.

Dissertation Chair: Erika A. Patall

Zambrano is currently an assistant professor of educational psychology at California State University, San Bernardino.

2024 DISSERTATION OF DISTINCTION
Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership

ROBERT JAMES THRASH IV

*We Gon' Be Alright: A Phenomenology of Black Educators,
Occupational Stressors, and Wellbeing*

James Thrash's phenomenological study uses visual media from the social media platform TikTok to understand the nuanced workplace experiences of contemporary Black teachers, counselors and administrators and the diverse ways they activate their powerfully nuanced Blackness and harness it to effectively cope with gendered and racialized occupational stressors and to attend to their wellbeing.

Dissertation Chair: Shaun Harper

Thrash is the director of pupil services at ISANA Academies and chief consultant at The Thrashwell Group.

2024 DISSERTATION OF DISTINCTION
Doctor of Education,
Organizational Change and Leadership

ZACHARY J. BARRICKLOW

*Leading Innovation and Change: Presidential Perspectives on the Future of Work and
How Rural-Serving Community Colleges Adapt*

The purpose of the study was to understand how innovative, rural community college presidents in the United States approach leading their institutions through adaptations aligned with the changing nature of work. Rapidly shifting economic, technological, and demographic forces disproportionately impact rural communities, and community colleges play a critical role in helping these communities adjust. The study explored how presidents monitor and interpret external environmental factors related to the changing nature of work, empower their institutions to address the organizational factors that inhibit or contribute to innovation, and what principles or concepts they rely on to lead organizational change and innovation. The study employed a qualitative design to inductively assemble an understanding of the research questions. Seventeen presidents from 15 states and every region of the United States participated in semi-structured interviews. The study's findings and recommendations are important to society because of the role community colleges play in fostering equitable opportunity and economic mobility in the communities they serve.

Dissertation Chair: Robert A. Filback

Barricklow is the associate vice president for strategy and rural innovation, North Carolina Community College System.

2024 DISSERTATION OF DISTINCTION
Doctor of Education,
Organizational Change and Leadership

ERIC OBENG-AMOAKO EDMONDS

*Understanding Cross-Cultural Knowledge Sharing in
Ghana's Energy Sector: An Exploratory Study*

In a knowledge-driven global economy, understanding the complex ecological differences facilitates efficient knowledge-sharing practices. Efficient knowledge sharing in cross-cultural settings starts with acknowledging the inherent and overlapping identities in Indigenous organizations. While the study focuses on Ghana's energy sector, the findings transcend a single industry and have urgent implications across the broader African continent. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which describes the nested spheres of influence in human development, underpins the study. The research findings challenge monolithic perceptions and prescriptions in emerging markets. It further offers insights into the antecedent factors that drive knowledge sharing. Most importantly, the work provides a pragmatic lens to interrogate the status quo in cross-cultural business partnerships. Thus, the study seeks to extend the current literature on knowledge management and organizational performance by advancing an inter-organizational framework. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan made a similar poignant observation: "If globalization is to succeed, we must ensure that the global market is embedded in broadly shared values and practices that reflect global social needs."

Dissertation Chair: Monique Claire Datta

Edmonds is currently a business development & process integration manager.



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