

ECC PRIDE Cohort #1 Members Bios



**Anna
Brochet**

I grew up in Torrance and consider the South Bay to be one of the best places to live in LA county because of its diversity, good food, proximity to LA and the OC and of course, the beaches! I went to UCLA and received my BA in Interpersonal Communications.

I lived in Kyoto, Japan for a total of 2 years, one year as a student and another year as an English Instructor. I met my French husband in Kyoto and we traveled a bit around the world before getting married and settling back in LA. I received my MS in Counseling from CSULB and feel I have the best job in the world supporting and guiding EOPS students.

I care deeply about equity and social justice issues in education and am passionate about advocating on behalf of first generation, educationally and socioeconomically disadvantaged students. I hope to continue my studies to analyze these issues and eventually get an EDD in the near future. I'm also a mother to two young children, 4 and 2 years old and my "free time" is spent with them and savoring every moment with my family as they are growing up too fast! Their cuddles and giggles keep me going.



**David
Brown**

I began working at El Camino College in August 1998 at the Extended Opportunity Programs & Services (EOPS) as a Peer Advisor.

El Camino and the EOPS program provided me a foundation that I was able to build my career upon. I earned an Associate Degree in Sociology from ECC, a Bachelor's degree in Sociology with a minor in Economics from CSUDH and a Master degree in Public Policy & Administration with a certificate as a Public Management Analyst from CSULB.

Over the past eighteen years I have worked at ECC and the ECC Compton Center in multiple departments including Admissions & Records, General Counseling and EOPS. As a student worker, temporary and full time classified employee I've had the opportunity to serve numerous roles. My previous titles included; Program Assistant, Program Technician, Project Specialist and Coordinator. Since September 2015, I've been the Assistant Director of EOPS/CARE & CalWORKs where I'm actively serving the needs of our students and working to improve our programs.



**Monica
Chaban**

Monica Chaban joined the CIS Department, Business Division in Fall 2010. She currently teaches both core and CIS programming courses. During the past several years, Ms. Chaban has participated in several committees, including the SLO, DCC, and CCC committees. In addition to committee work, she has developed several new courses and programs, and has convened the CIS advisory board for the past four years.

Prior to joining ECC, Ms. Chaban worked as an IT project manager in new development, working for several large scale computer information systems. She is also an adjunct instructor at Santa Monica College. Ms. Chaban is an avid sailor and photographer, plays steels drums as well as several string instruments, travels and grows her own food.



**Linda
Clowers**

I am a native Angelino who grew up within a thoroughly Southern family culture. And by family, I am referring to my first degree relatives, extended family, neighbor-friends, and other so-called “fictive kin.” My childhood memories are replete with both planned and impromptu family gatherings which served as my earliest forms of education. I eagerly sought out opportunities to learn about my family’s history (and the collective history of African Americans in the South) at the feet of the elders. And I took full advantage of opportunities to learn about everything from religion to politics to what not to wear after Labor Day as I eavesdropped from behind the sitting room sofa while the “grown folks” talked after supper. My early experiences taught me the value of faith, family, and a good sense of humor. And so ingrained was the value of education that there was never a question that I would follow the family tradition of higher education.

Upon completion of my undergraduate (UCLA – BA, Psychology) and graduate (UCSB – MA and PhD, Counseling Psychology) studies, I began my career in academia. After almost a decade as a university professor, I made the transition into academic administration. I have since gained experience within the community college system, having worked within the Los Angeles Community College District in addition to my current position at El Camino College. Currently, I spend as much time as I possibly can hanging out with and loving on my family (which still includes my first degree relatives, extended family, neighbor-friends, and other so-called “fictive kin”). And I am slowly beginning to embrace my inevitable transition into one of the “grown folks” at family gatherings with more than a thing or two to say about politics, religion, and what not to wear after Labor Day.

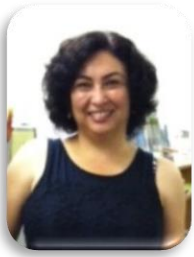


**Rocio
Diaz**

I was born in Zacatecas, Mexico, and grew up in Carson. As a first-generation student, I didn’t have older siblings or relatives to turn to, to ask questions about my homework or education. But what I gained from watching my mom and family members was a strong work ethic and to stay connected to my roots.

Despite being unfamiliar with the educational system in the US, they were always supportive. I remember getting into UC Berkeley and University of La Verne and asking my high school government teacher which one she thinks I should go to. She looked at me dumbfounded and said, “Rocio! You need to go to UC Berkeley!” I was a Spring admit to UC Berkeley, so I attended El Camino College for one semester. I graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology and minor in City & Regional Planning. After two years of working in MBA Admissions at the Haas School of Business at Berkeley, I discovered my passion for education and working with students (but on the student services side).

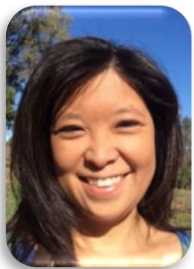
I pursued my Master’s in Educational Counseling at USC, and had the opportunity to intern in different areas such as Disability Services and First-Year Experience. After being an Adjunct Counselor at various community colleges, I am happy to be full-time at El Camino, where I can give back to the community where I grew up. I live in Pasadena, but a lot of my time is spent visiting my family and my dog Fluffy in the South Bay!



**Maria Elena
Dominguez**

After obtaining a bachelor degree in political science from University of California, Santa Barbara, I started working in post-secondary institutions. I was first hired as a financial aid counselor for Pepperdine University in which my focus was working with graduate students.

In 1997, I joined El Camino College as Financial Aid advisor. I enjoy working in the Financial Aid Office because I am able to use my communication and analytical skills to assist students in obtaining federal and state funds for their educational goals. Even though I don't have contact with the whole student population at El Camino College, I feel that my work does help improve student's lives.



**Melissa
Fujiwara**

Melissa Fujiwara joined the Sociology Department at El Camino College in Fall 2015. Prior to teaching at El Camino, Melissa taught at CSU Fullerton and Irvine Valley College. Melissa received her PhD in sociology from the University of Southern California in 2012.

Her dissertation titled, "The Color of Success: Physicians of Color in Los Angeles," focused on the ways in which race and gender shape the professional trajectories and personal lives of African American and Japanese American physicians in Los Angeles. She especially likes to teach the department's introductory course as well as courses which focus on gender, race, and class. Melissa has three daughters ages 11, 8, and 3.



**Gary
Greco**

I am relatively new to California and the Community College System. I currently hail from Connecticut and come from the Community College system there. I began employment here in California on January 4th, 2016, and have been here a little over a year.

Previously, I have had a history of working as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for the Connecticut Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, working with, and placing clients with disabilities into employment opportunities. I then worked in the educational, and post-secondary educational arenas providing support services for students with disabilities, more specifically, Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. I have also worked as an Associate and Adjunct Professor teaching American Sign Language, and Interpreting Coursework. I am a certified Interpreter and have done interpreting work in a variety of settings.



**Edith
Gutierrez**

Edith Gutierrez is the Director of EOPS/CARE and CalWORKs at El Camino College. Edith is a graduate of the University of California, Los Angeles where she received a bachelor of arts in sociology with a minor in chicana/o studies.

She completed a master of science in counseling at California State University, Long Beach. Prior to her current position, Edith worked with the Educational Talent Search TRIO Program at CSULB for nine years where she first served as Program Coordinator and then as Assistant Director. Before working at CSULB, Edith served as Academic Counselor for the Talent Search and Upward Bound Programs at the TELACU Education Foundation. Edith began her career in higher education with the Early Academic Outreach Program at UCLA.

Edith Gutierrez has more than 10 years of experience working to increase college access, retention, and success for low income and underrepresented students. She has held various positions in the University of California and California State University systems and is excited to have joined El Camino College. Edith has dedicated her professional career to developing and managing programs that prepare and empower students from diverse backgrounds to pursue postsecondary education and succeed in achieving their educational goals.



**Arturo
Hernandez**

I have lived and worked in the South Bay area for most of my life. I am a first generation college graduate. I have received an Associate of Science in Mathematics from El Camino College, a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from the University of California Irvine and a Master of Science in Applied Mathematics from the California State University Long Beach.

Over the past 14 years I've had the opportunity to serve as Director of the Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA), the Student Support Services for STEM (SSS-STEM), and Co-Director of the National Science Foundation Scholarship for STEM (NSF S-STEM) Programs. Through MESA, SSS-STEM, NSF S-STEM and other related STEM initiatives, I have had the privilege to work with our low income, first generation students to facilitate their success through transfer, scholarships, internships, research assistance, conferences and leadership opportunities.

I have participated in statewide activities with the Chancellor's Office, MESA Statewide Office (University of California), and with the Community College Association of MESA Directors (CCAMD) where I have served as Chair, Co-Chair and Data and Analysis officer. In my free time, I enjoy going to the movies, hiking, reading and traveling.



**Tuan
Hua**

Tuan Hua joined El Camino College in March 2016 and is currently the Professional Development Assistant in Professional Development and Learning. Tuan graduated from UCLA with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and a Minor in Spanish Linguistics. He is a member of Alpha Phi Omega, a community service fraternity.

During his studies, he studied abroad in Seville, Spain for 4 months, where he lived with a host family. Tuan has worked in the academic environment for more than 10 years, in which he previously served as a career advisor where he helped students with their professional development. In his spare time, Tuan enjoys eating, staying active, going to amusement parks, and hanging out with his friends.



**Lissette
Marquez**

I joined ECC as a student worker in 2012 working as a program aide for the Seeds Program under Childhood Education. When that grant-funded program ended in 2013, I worked briefly as the secretary in the Honors Transfer Program, then worked in the Special Resource Center as a senior clerical assistant from 2014-2015. In 2015, I secured my first full-time position at El Camino College as the secretary in the Academic Affairs. Just this month, I was promoted to administrative assistant in the Special Resource Center.

Prior to El Camino College, I worked in various fields. I have experience in retail, insurance and financial services (previously licensed), real estate (previously licensed), and banking. I searched for part-time work at El Camino College in 2012 because I was pursuing my bachelor's degree, which I completed in 2015, all while raising two children (now 3! Baby Dylan was born 11/27/17) and a husband. Ha!



**Kristina
Marquez**

I am passionate about giving students a second chance to reach their educational goals through the community college system. I have 10 years of experience in higher education and I joined El Camino College as the Assistant Director of Financial Aid in June of 2015.

I am thankful to have a position that allows me to help students find ways to make college affordable. Before joining El Camino College, I worked in the private education sector where I held positions such as Corporate Director of Financial Aid, Financial Aid Compliance and Training Manager, Regional Financial Aid Manager, Campus Financial Aid Director, and Registrar. After high school I attended Los Angeles Harbor College for two years before I transferred to the University of Southern California (USC). I have bachelor's degree in Political Science from USC and a master's degree in Public Administration, with an option in Urban Affairs from California State University, Long Beach.

I spend my free time with my husband Ryan, and two children, Rylee and Ryder. I am an advocate for childhood cancer awareness and I am also the Treasurer of my daughter's Girl Scout Brownie troop. I also enjoy Rams football, hosting backyard BBQs at my home in San Pedro, and weekend visits to Knott's Berry Farm.



**Gary
Medina**

I've spent time living in a variety of places, seven states, multiple cities, but I have called Southern California home. I'm the first in my family on either side to have obtained a master's degree, completing two graduate programs that ultimately led me to my profession as a librarian. I spent several years working for an investment newspaper, the American Red Cross and the education sector prior to being in my current role.

I've been working in libraries for over seven years and I started working at El Camino College in Fall 2016. My experience in libraries has included Collection Development, Program Review, Student Worker Management, Systems, Instructional Design, Reference, Database Management, Budget Management, and overall leadership in an academic library setting. My passion is information as it exists in all its forms and helping students connect to the research that they need. I'm the father of a spunky six year old that keeps me young. I enjoy being outside, spending time hiking, mountain biking, traveling, and surfing.



**Julie
Meredith**

Julie's tenure with El Camino College extends to July 2008, when she joined the Health Sciences and Athletics department. Her essential role in the department in addition to her established years of leadership experience made her an ideal candidate for El Camino's new PRIDE program.

Prior to joining El Camino College, Julie worked for the Torrance Unified School District setting up and coordinating the school computer lab and technology curriculum. In addition to her role in Technology Education, she worked as a Para Educator, assisting special education students. Throughout her nearly 20 years in public education, she has sought out leadership roles, including being elected president to Towers Elementary PTA and vice president of Bert Lynn Middle School PTSA. In recognition of her invaluable contributions, Torrance Unified School District awarded her the Honorary Service Award and the Continuing Service Award. Julie was born and raised in Torrance and is married with three children. When she is not working in the Athletics department, Julie enjoys relaxing at the beach with her family and puppy or cheering on the Los Angeles Kings



**Eduardo
Morales**

Dr. Eduardo Morales is a professor of mathematics at El Camino College and is currently celebrating his 12th year at the college. He has extensive experience working at the college level. His experience includes teaching at Loyola Marymount University, California State University (Long Beach), The University of Arizona, and Marymount College.

Professor Morales enjoys working with students at all levels and his experience includes teaching algebra, statistics, calculus, and mathematics for future elementary teachers. Dr. Morales hopes to one day teach a mathematics course in Spanish at El Camino College.

Dr. Eduardo Morales received his doctorate degree in Education Leadership from the University of Southern California, his Masters of Science degree in Mathematics from California State University, Long Beach, and his B.S. degree in Mathematics from Loyola Marymount University.

Professor Morales was a member of the scholarship committee for the Mexican American Alumni Association at Loyola Marymount University for more than ten years and spent several years volunteering at the Learning Rights Law Center in Los Angeles, California. He is a member of the Pi Mu Epsilon National Honorary Mathematics Society, Pi Lambda Theta International Honor Society and Professional Association in Education, The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, and the Phi Delta Gamma National Graduate Honor Society.



**David
Mussaw**

David Mussaw, Academic Affairs Analyst. David' career experience includes several years in accounting for legal, fashion retailer, and car rental companies. He has worked in academic affairs for the past two years and is an active member in ECCE. He earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from CSU Fullerton and is completing a master's degree in public administration at CSU Northridge this spring.



**Maria
Ramirez**

I was born in Jalisco, Mexico in the city of Guadalajara. My family came to the United States when I was 5 years old and I grew up in Pomona, Ca. I moved to Long Beach in 2006 and lived there for 10 years. Currently, I live in the city of Highland Park which is near South Pasadena. I graduated from CSULB with a Liberal Studies BS degree and an MS in Counseling. I am the first in my family to graduate with a bachelor's and master's degree. If it had not been for the support I received from community teaching and counseling faculty, I would not have achieved all the academic and personal goals I set for myself.

Prior to being hired as a full-time faculty member at El Camino College on March 2016, I served students at California State University, Long Beach, Santa Monica College, East Los Angeles College, Los Angeles Harbor College, and Glendale Community College. I have 9 years of experience working in higher education. I enjoy serving all students. My passion is social justice which is why being an EOPS Counselor truly is my dream career. I can serve students and at the same time advocate for social justice issues that directly affect my student population. I'm experienced in project management, program development & coordination, teaching and Counseling. I enjoy spending my free time with my family and friends. My hobbies include hiking, riding my bike and trying new foods.



**Maria
Smith**

Born and raised in Sun Valley, CA, I am now a resident of the South Bay because I love the beach weather much more than the dry desert heat. I graduated from UC Berkeley, where I received a Bachelor's in Rhetoric. I am a first generation college graduate in my family, which is all due to all the support and encouragement they gave me through my childhood years.

I have been in the HR industry for 18 years because my one true passion has been working and helping others. My experience ranges from knowledge in Employee Relations, Payroll, Leaves, Benefits, New hire processing/orientations, Bargaining Agreement Interpretation, Research, Analysis and direct leadership oversight with our core team. I'm known as the problem-solver in our office and true to that, I always find an answer through hard work and research when necessary. I'm great with people and numbers. Aside from work I am a wife and the mother of a 9 year old creative girl and a 13 year old energetic young man.

My weekends are filled with family gatherings, kids sports, school projects and countless library and park visits. I hope to pursue a Master's degree in the near future and to continue to gain valuable experience and skills to acquire a higher level HR Management position.



**Greg
Toya**

Dr. Gregory J. Toya has been a higher education administrator for over 20 years and currently serves as the Director of Student Development at El Camino College. Greg advises student government and student clubs and manages student discipline, commencement, auxiliary services funding, and photo identification.

Dr. Toya previously served as the Associate Dean of Students and Interim Associate Dean of Student Life and Leadership at California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM). Greg also served students in cultural centers at San Diego State University and the University of California, Davis. Greg initiated his student affairs career in residence life at the University of California, Irvine (UCI), University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Maryland (UMD).

Dr. Toya's teaching experience includes courses in Education, Asian American Studies, Social Ecology, first-year student success, and career development. Greg developed and taught courses addressing multicultural leadership and the role of diversity in schools. Greg also spent two years in Japan as an Assistant Language Teacher for the Japanese Exchange Teaching program.

Greg was the first in his family to earn a bachelors, masters, and doctorate. Greg earned a bachelor's degree in Social Ecology from the UCI, a master's degree in Counseling and Student Development from the UMD and a doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of California, San Diego and CSUSM.

Greg hails from Torrance, CA and currently resides in the greater San Diego, CA area with his life partner and pet rabbits. Greg can be found playing basketball, rooting for the Los Angeles Dodgers, eating SPAM musubi and Mexican food in his community and travel endeavors.



**Joshua
Escalante
Troesh**

I have been teaching business courses since 2000 at numerous colleges and universities. My most recent industry position was as the Vice President of Marketing & Business Development for Service Plus Credit Union in Riverside, which ended in 2008 alongside the financial crisis (we didn't offer any of the crazy mortgages, but many members received them from other financial institutions when we didn't offer them).

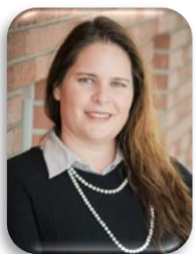
I have also owned a number of businesses in a variety of industries. My MBA and Bachelors are both from Azusa Pacific University and I am currently taking courses at UCLA to qualify me to sit for the CFP certification exam.



**Starleen Van
Buren**

I am a California native and was raised primarily in the South Bay. Both my parents were immigrants and really stressed the importance of education. As the first one in my family to complete college, I was fortunate enough to earn a B.A. in communications from CSU Dominguez Hills, an MBA from the University of Redlands, and in 2014, a doctorate in educational leadership with an emphasis in educational psychology from USC. I started my career at El Camino College in 2005 as a marketing consultant for the Small Business Development Center. I worked for the program for 1.5 years, then handled marketing for the economic development division for another 1.5 years. About that time, a new dean was hired (Jose Anaya), and the SBDC director resigned to take a position at another college. I served as the interim director for the SBDC for a few months, then was hired as the fulltime director. As an entrepreneur at heart, I enjoy helping students and the public start and/or grow their business.

My days are spent teaching business-related workshops, providing one-on-one advising to clients, and overseeing the operations of the SBDC. I pursued my doctorate degree because I like working in the field of education and to become a more effective teacher and administrator. On a personal note, I have been married for almost 24 years and love spending time with my husband and his family along with our herd of rescued pets which includes three cats and two neurotic dogs.



**Vanessa
Watson**

I've worked in public education for over a decade in the field of Human Resources as a HR Technician, Personnel Analyst and HR Manager. Previously I've worked at LB Unified School District, Centinela Valley Union HS District, LB City College, and Coast Community College.

I've earned my Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and am working on a Master's degree in Public Administration. In addition to my duties of hiring fabulous new faculty, I serve as an EER Rep sitting on hiring committees, I serve on the District's EEO Committee, and I am a mentor in the Puente Program. I am a California Licensed Massage Therapist and spend my weekends (and some evenings) working at a spa in Manhattan Beach. If I'm not at work or studying, you will find me outside walking my 2 year old pit bull Rocky.



**Kareem
Watts**

A native of Southern California, in 2017 I graduated from Biola University with a Bachelor's in Organizational Leadership, and passion to help students achieve academic success has led me back to school to complete my Masters in Higher Education Administration. Since the year 2000, I have worked with young adults, creating youth oriented events in my local community to inspire them through positive spoken word poetry and uplifting music.

I have been working in higher education for over 7 years, serving students at Mount St. Mary's University and many other institutions, but have always been drawn to serving students within the community college setting. I joined El Camino College in 2014, and currently assist students in the Financial Aid department.