

Cradle-to-Career Selection for Advisory Boards Committee

Staff Report

Date Report Issued: June 13, 2024
Attention: Members of Selection for Advisory Boards Committee
Subject: **Summary of the Community Engagement Advisory Board Recruitment and Selection Process**
Staff Contact: Marykate Cruz Jones, Chief of Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships

At this meeting, the Selection for Advisory Boards Committee (Committee) will have the opportunity to discuss and slate candidates and runners up for the four upcoming Community Engagement Advisory Board vacancies to recommend to the Governing Board at the August Governing Board meeting.

Requested Action:

After review and consideration of the applications, rubric, and upcoming vacancies, Staff recommends that the Committee approve four new members for appointment to the Community Engagement Advisory Board and four runners up for recommendation to the Governing Board.

- ❖ Move to recommend to the Governing Board to approve four applicants for appointment to the Community Engagement Advisory Board and four runners up.

Background:

Below is a comprehensive overview of the Community Engagement Advisory Board's responsibilities and an analysis of current vacancies. This information provides insights into the duties of Community Engagement Advisory Board members and highlights the areas where new Community Engagement Advisory Board members are needed to ensure effective governance and diverse perspectives.

Scope of the Community Engagement Advisory Board:

[Education Code Section 10865](#) specifies the Community Engagement Advisory Board holds responsibility for examining whether the managing entity is creating strong feedback loops with data users, supporting evidence-based decision-making and analytical capacity, and ensuring equitable access to actionable information. The Community Engagement Advisory Board consists of 16 public members appointed by the Governing Board. Members include advocacy organization staff, community organization staff, and the end users of the data system, such as practitioners and students.

Vacancy Analysis:

At the outset of the Cradle-to-Career Data's (C2C) development, all Advisory Board seats were appointed in staggered term lengths; however, after the initial year, all appointed positions serve three-year terms. The following members of the Community Engagement Advisory Board will cycle off the Board in August: Meredith Curry Nuñez, Nancy Jodaitis, Paige Loverin, and Marcos Montes, leaving four vacancies on the Community Engagement Advisory Board. The terms for the newly appointed members will be from 2024 through 2027.

As the Community Engagement Advisory Board faces vacancies, it is imperative to analyze how those impending openings will affect the Advisory Board as the new selection process begins. In terms of the four members that will be cycling off the Community Engagement Advisory Board, two members represent advocacy organizations, one member represents a community organization, and one member is a practitioner. Given their departure and pending the new selection of members, the Community Engagement Advisory Board will be composed of five practitioners, three members that represent community organizations, two members that represent advocacy organizations, and two students. The biographies of all current Community Engagement Advisory Board members can be found on Attachment A. More information regarding the breakdown of member term limits and representation can be found below:

	2024	2025	2026
Advocacy Organization	1 Vacancy	2 Vacancies	1 Vacancy
Community Organization	2 Vacancies	1 Vacancy	1 Vacancy
Practitioner	1 Vacancy	3 Vacancies	2 Vacancies
Students	-	-	2 Vacancies

As the [Governance Manual](#) specifies, it is important for the Community Engagement Advisory Board to bolster the public’s voice and cultivate a diversity of perspectives. Additionally, attention should be placed on recruiting members who have expertise in equity, and prioritizing community members who can be conduits of information to and from the data system’s intended audiences.

Based on this information, the Committee deliberated and approved the ideal populations for appointment for the upcoming Community Engagement Advisory Board vacancies, consisting of one representative from an advocacy organization, two representatives from a community organization, and one student at the April 12, 2024 Committee meeting. The approved ideal populations for appointment were identified by the Committee to take into consideration during the slating process, however, final slating decisions will be made at the June 27 Committee meeting.

Instructions for Committee Members:

The Office of Cradle-to-Career Data (Office) received 38¹ applications for four vacant positions. To support Committee members in their review of the candidates, the Office prepared the following for members:

1. **A [scoring rubric](#)** which defines the criteria used for scoring the applications. Committee members approved the rubric at the April 12, 2024 Committee meeting.
2. **A PDF application packet** with the submitted applications.
3. **A summary spreadsheet** of the applicants assigned to each member for review.
4. **A Google Form** for members to submit the results of scoring the applicants based on the rubric.

Once all the rubric scores are in from members, the Office will collate the results and share the top candidates as a decision support tool at the June 27 meeting.

Selection of Seats by Category:

To facilitate the Committee's decision making, the Office organized the applications by category relative to the sector or population represented. Based on the applications received and the Governance Manual's guidance to aim for diverse perspectives and backgrounds, it is the task of the Committee to review the applications, seeking unique individuals and keeping in mind the vacancies identified in this staff report.

¹ The Office received an additional application that was not reviewed by the Committee. The [Governance Manual](#) outlines, a person who works for an organization or person represented on the Governing Board may not be selected to serve on an Advisory Board. An organization is defined as a state agency or representative of a segment, as opposed to providers that report to an agency.

Members Terming Out in 2024:

Meredith Curry Nuñez (Community Organization)

As the Executive Director, Meredith Curry Nuñez leads the Northern California College Promise Coalition (NCCPC) in its vision to shape college success efforts in the region by advancing policy, building campus partnerships, driving workforce development, and facilitating communities of practice. She also serves on the National College Attainment Network Advisory Task Force. NCCPC is a coalition of 30+ college promise and access programs serving over 60,000 students across 12 counties including and surrounding the Bay Area. Mer previously served in a variety of roles with the California College Guidance Initiative as the Director of Operations and then Director of Content and Data Management for CaliforniaColleges.edu.

Nancy Jodaitis (Advocacy Organization)

Nancy Jodaitis is the Director of Higher Education at Immigrants Rising. She has dedicated her skills to building educational pathways for undocumented students in higher education for the past fourteen years. Her efforts include providing technical support to post-secondary institutions to expand institutional practices to increase undocumented students' enrollment and graduation rates. She also conducts trainings and creates learning communities for educators, administrators, financial aid, and admissions departments to facilitate cross-campus learning. Nancy is currently coordinating a statewide initiative to increase equitable enrollment of in-state tuition at public colleges and universities. She is also researching award rates for the CA Dream Act. To increase promising practices, Nancy has developed a library of educational materials for undocumented students and guides for colleges & universities. Previously, Nancy worked for more than a decade as a financial aid counselor, pre-admissions/transfer advisor, and undocumented student advocate.

Paige Loverin (Practitioner)

Paige Loverin, MA, PPS, is a counselor for Visalia Unified's College and Career Readiness. She has worked in K-12 student services for 26 years and has served

as a CCC adjunct instructor. Visalia Unified sits at the center of Tulare County and serves 29,953 students.

Marcos Montes (Community Organization)

Marcos Montes is part of the Southern California College Attainment Network where he manages SoCal CAN's Policy Agenda, oversees the Changemakers student advocacy fellowship, and Let's Go To College CA. Marcos' goal with the network is to help advance equitable policies and practices that support systematically excluded and oppressed students, cultivate the next generation of student leaders, address college affordability and increase the number of undocumented students attending college. He graduated in 2018 from Cal State LA with a B.A. in Political Science and a minor in Law and Society. He is the first in his family to graduate from a university and a proud product of college success programs. Marcos previously served as a statewide student leader as Vice President of Legislative Affairs for the Cal State Student Association. In 2017 he was recognized as CSU Student Advocate of the Year and in 2018 he received a State Resolution from Speaker Anthony Rendon and Senator Bill Dodd commending his work as a student leader.

Members Terming Out in 2025:

Michelle Cheang (Community Organization)

Dr. Michelle Cheang is a nonprofit executive, currently serving as the Chief Advancement Officer at LA Promise Fund (LAPF). Dr. Cheang is passionate about transforming student learning by supporting high quality education, a positive school climate, increasing family and community support, and providing high quality wraparound services.

Prior to joining LAPF, Dr. Cheang served five years as Dean for the Los Angeles Community College District. Dr. Cheang led academic departments, K-12 partnerships, adult education, noncredit programs, academic support services, and "College to Career" grants. Prior to that Dr. Cheang launched a new department for

a Los Angeles-based nonprofit focused on developing positive alternative pathways into education and careers for in and out-of-school youth.

Dr. Cheang obtained her undergraduate degree from the University of California, San Diego in Biological Anthropology and Critical Gender Studies. She then went on to earn a Master's Degree in Public Administration and a Doctorate in Education from California State University, Northridge. Her dissertation title is Community College and Community-Based Nonprofit Partnerships: Supporting the College Pipeline for Opportunity Youth.

Parshan Khosravi (Advocacy Organization)

Parshan Khosravi is an education advocate, grassroots organizer, and unapologetic voice for equity-driven public policy. As a first-generation Iranian refugee and a former ESL student, Parshan has both seen the power of education as a mechanism for community empowerment, as well as the numerous roadblocks and opportunity gaps that face nontraditional and low-income students pursuing education, especially in BIPOC communities. Parshan is also a devout Zoroastrian and spends most of his spare time organizing with his faith community and representing Zoroastrians at the local, national, and global level.

Prior to joining uAspire's team, Parshan served as the Government Relations Director for the UC Student Association, where he represented over 285,000 students of the University of California system at the state and national level, fighting for a more accessible and affordable education. Parshan brings with him over 10 years of experience advocating for higher education access and equity, and he continues his path towards that mission as the CA Policy Director for uAspire, leading the organization's policy portfolio in California. A double alum of the University of California, Parshan received his Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Education Sciences from UC Irvine and his Master's Degree in Public Policy from UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs.

Orquidea Largo (Practitioner)

A native of the San Joaquin Central Valley, Dr. Orquídea Largo was born in Patterson and raised in Crows Landing and Newman, CA. The daughter of two Mexican immigrants, her career is deep-rooted in the Central Valley and the University of California, Merced campus. She earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration, a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from California State University, Fresno, and an Ed.D. in educational and organizational leadership from the University of the Pacific. Her dissertation underscored the importance of continuous improvement in K-12. In 2001, Dr. Largo joined the University of California, Office of the President's Office of Relations with Schools and Colleges, and the UC Merced campus in 2002.

Dr. Largo is an experienced administrator responsible for the Center for Educational Partnerships (CEP) within the Student Affairs unit at UC Merced, which houses multiple state, federal, and privately funded academic preparation programs. She has helped secure over \$38 million in federal, state, and private grants to provide student, parent, and school-centered services aimed “to provide student, school, and parent-centered services that ultimately result in students having the greatest number of postsecondary choices from the widest array of options upon graduation.”

Dr. Largo serves as Chair of the University of California's Student Academic Preparation and Educational Partnerships (SAPEP) P20 Leadership Council, member of the University of California's the K-12 Academic Preparation Leadership Council (APLC), a member of the National Academic Assembly Council with the College Board, and a senior fellow of the American Leadership Forum (ALF) Great Valley Chapter XI. In addition, she is an active member of multiple P-20 regional councils in the San Joaquin Central Valley. She is married to Victor Manuel Largo Martinez, and they have three children: Victor Guadalupe, Bonilet, and Fernán, all in grade school.

Jackie Nevarez (Practitioner)

Jackie Nevarez is a first-generation student, and the child of a former foster youth, and was encumbered with the lack of knowledge of post-secondary systems. However, she was committed to empowering youth to be successful. Initially, she used her

degrees in Psychology and Counseling to work for non-profit mental health organizations. In this capacity, she counseled young people on the verge of being placed in institutional settings or who were already in such environments. After over a decade of intensive counseling, she recognized that a better way to create change was to be an active agent in the reconstruction of systems that educate and impact the future of California. As she approaches her twentieth anniversary as a public school counselor, she reflects on how much she has enjoyed connecting “boots on the ground” experiences from the 5th (Elk Grove Unified School District) and 11th (Sacramento County Unified School Districts) largest school districts in the state of California to numerous county/state level organizations such as CaliforniaColleges.edu or Nor Cal College Promise Coalition. Her goal still remains, however, to support the facilitation of sustainable mindsets, initiatives, and data continuity to advance the positive future for California's youth.

Lisa Rodriguez (Practitioner)

Lisa Rodriguez is the Director of Student Services for the Kings County Office of Education. Her work allows her to engage in work with K12 districts, Post-Secondary Institutions, and Industry Partners around data and facilitation of continuous improvement around all aspects of College and Career Readiness. She works alongside districts to serve special populations as the coordinator of the Kings County Foster Youth Coordinating Services Program and McKinney Vento Homeless Children and Youth program. Furthermore supporting districts through their continuous improvement efforts through Differentiated Assistance and LCAP review. Her work with the Tulare-Kings College Career Collaborative has allowed for strong partnerships with industry and Workforce Investment Boards.

Sbeydeh Viveros-Walton (Advocacy Organization)

Sbeydeh Viveros-Walton (she/her/ella) serves as the founding Director of Higher Education at Public Advocates, a civil rights legal organization committed to eliminating disparities in opportunity for marginalized communities and ensuring that all students have access to a quality education.

Her professional expertise is in collective impact P-16 policy and advocacy, equity-focused program development, and strategic communications. Before joining Public Advocates, she held leadership positions in the public and non-profit sectors including, Berkeley Mayor's Office, City of San Leandro, Goodwill Industries and 10,000 Degrees. Her civic and community leadership experience includes KQED's Community Advisory Board, San Leandro Library Historical Commission, and the Peralta Colleges Foundation. Sbeydeh is a proud community college transfer student from Chabot College. She graduated from UC Berkeley with a BA in Rhetoric and Ethnic Studies. She also holds a Master's in Public Administration from San Francisco State University.

Members Terming Out in 2026:

Lorenzo Gamboa (Practitioner)

Lorenzo is originally from a very small town with eight graduating seniors in his public high school class. Coming from a close-knit community, he is familiar with the assumptions and fears one may have when considering leaving town for college. Reflecting on his own journey of college, he aspires to clarify the daunting experience for other first-generation students that he once faced himself. Lorenzo has over fifteen years of experience in college advising and currently oversees new initiatives.

Adam Gottlieb (Advocacy Organization)

Adam Gottlieb, MPP serves as Director of Postsecondary Strategy & Policy at UNITE-LA, a Los Angeles-based nonprofit organization. In his role, Gottlieb oversees policy and systems change strategy as they relate to postsecondary student access and success at local, state and federal levels.

Gottlieb earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Thought and Practice from the University of Redlands and a Master of Public Policy degree from Vanderbilt University. He has previous work experience consulting in Los Angeles and as a Graduate Intern at the Tennessee Office of Education and as the inaugural Policy and Advocacy Fellow for Complete Tennessee, a Nashville-based nonprofit organization. Gottlieb serves his alma mater as a member of the University of Redlands Board of Trustees and Alumni Board of Directors. Gottlieb hails from and lives in Los Angeles with his partner, Dr. Alexandra Kaufman, an internal medicine resident at UCLA.

Karina Lopez (Practitioner)

Karina Lopez is a community college counselor for the EOPS/CARE/Next Up Program at Compton College. She dedicates her time and skills to helping students start college and transfer or graduate with a certificate or associate degree. She serves first-generation, low-income, single parents, current or former foster youth, undocumented, and students of color within the programs she serves as a counselor.

She was inspired to become a counselor because as a first-generation, low-income, inner city, woman of color she needed a lot of mentorship and encouragement to dream big and pursue higher education. She was the first in her family to graduate high school and college. She earned a Bachelor's Degree (B.A.) in Psychology from California State University Northridge (CSUN) and a Masters of Education (M.Ed) in Educational Counseling from the University of Southern California (USC). She works every day to care for and love her students. In addition to counseling, she also serves on campus committees and task forces for Guided Pathways, Undocumented students, and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) to help improve the college going experiences for all students.

Previously Karina worked at Pasadena City College as an EOPS/CARE/Next Up Counselor, Welcome Center Coordinator, and Pathways Coach. As well as at Mount San Antonio College (MtSAC) as a General and EOPS/CARE Counselor. In her free time, Karina enjoys being outdoors (hiking, biking, camping, outdoor concerts), visiting museums, and spending time with her family.

Carla Lopez-Valdes (Community Organization)

Carla Lopez-Valdes was born and raised in Los Angeles to Salvadoran parents. For over 15 years, she has been a social justice advocate in the nonprofit sector. Through this work, she has advocated for domestic workers' rights, health access, and education equity for underserved communities across Los Angeles County. It is her personal mission to advocate for policies, programs, and resources that play a critical role in ensuring communities in need can fully thrive.

Attachment A

She currently serves as the Associate Director of Government and Community Relations at Para Los Niños (For The Kids), an organization that works through a holistic lens to ensure children and families can fully thrive. Previously, she worked at the Center for Powerful Public Schools, where she oversaw family and community engagement. Prior to that role, she worked at Alliance for a Better Community (ABC), where she led advocacy efforts, policy campaigns, and stakeholder engagement.

She holds a bachelor's degree in Sociology and Women's Studies from the University of California, Riverside, and a Master's in Public Administration with a focus on Public Policy Analysis from California State University, Northridge. Currently, she is a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership for Social Justice program at Loyola Marymount University.

Mike Nguyen (Student)

Mike Nguyen is from San Jose, California, and proudly represents all students of California in overseeing the development of the future Cradle-to-Career Data System. Currently, he is a first-generation undergraduate student at the University of California, Berkeley, in the College of Letters and Sciences.

Most recently, he has represented over half a million youth as a Commissioner At-Large of Santa Clara County and served as a National Youth Advisor to The Kroger Company. As a County Commissioner, he provided critical feedback for institutional wellness for public schools and served on the Education Subcommittee. As an Advisor, he engaged with Kroger Executives on Zero Hunger and Zero Waste initiatives and launched a food security campaign for Silicon Valley. In every role, he's committed to assessing the atmosphere and seeing where he can contribute to advancing equity, data analytics, government policy, and community outreach. He genuinely believes in the power of the next generation of youth and that all students in California should have personalized access and guidance for higher education and beyond to reach success.

Mike has earned national recognition as an Ambassador of the United Nations of the United States of America and United States Presidential Scholar Semifinalist by the U.S. Department of Education.

Alexis Takagi (Student)

Alexis Takagi is a second-year doctoral student at Santa Clara University's (SCU) School of Education and Counseling Psychology, where she is pursuing an EdD in Social Justice Leadership with an emphasis on higher education. Alexis earned her BA in Communications with honors from Santa Clara University in 2022 and was subsequently appointed by Governor Gavin Newsom as a commission member for the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC), serving as the student representative for the independent non-profit sector. She currently works at Stanford University's School of Engineering as an Outreach Coordinator, where she supports the Education Affiliate Program designed to create and maintain long-term relationships between students and the school's corporate partners. Outside of work, Alexis conducts research on college choice and postsecondary readiness of Latinx students and also contributes to Santa Clara University's Thriving Neighbors Program, which prepares first-generation students of color throughout the K-12 educational pipeline for college success.

Additionally, Alexis served as co-chair of the policy and budget advocacy team in the Independent California Colleges Advocate Program (ICCAP) (21/22 cohort), representing over 329,000 students at independent non-profit institutions. Through this work, she and her cohort successfully advocated for a \$25.9 million investment in improvements in the Cal Grant Program for students attending Independent California Colleges and Universities (ICCU), which was adopted into the state budget. Alexis is a proud first-generation California community college transfer student and student advocate.