



**The National Association of Latino Elected & Appointed Officials  
Educational Fund**

*presents*

**NALEO Education Leadership Initiative**

*7<sup>th</sup> Annual NALEO National Summit on the  
State of Latino Education*

*A National Completion Agenda:  
Policy that Supports Postsecondary Quality  
and Completion*

**September 26-28, 2011**

**Washington, D.C.**

*Speaker Biographies*

## **Opening Remarks – The State of Latino Education**

### **Hon. Alex Padilla**

California State Senator  
NALEO Vice President  
State Capitol, Room 4038  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Phone: (916) 651-4020

On December 6th, 2010, Senator Alex Padilla was sworn in to serve a second four-year term in the California Senate. He won legislative approval for 51 bills, 36 of which were signed into law by the Governor. In September 2010, Governor Schwarzenegger signed Senate Bill 1440, authored by Senator Alex Padilla, into law. SB 1440 creates a clear and certain pathway for Community College students seeking to transfer to the California State University (CSU) system. The bill better aligns California's higher education system, saving students time, money and freeing up state resources to serve more students. Currently, he serves as a member of the Board of Trustees for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.) Corporation, the Institute's governing body. He was elected to the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Board of Directors in June 2010 for a three-year term. Prior to being elected into public office, he worked for Hughes Aircraft, U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, and later for Assemblymember Tony Cardenas. As a member of the Senate, Alex Padilla proudly represents more than 850,000 residents of the San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles. He graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.) with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and completed a post-graduate program in public policy with the CORO Foundation.

## **Session I: Public and Political Will for Latino Student Success and College Completion**

### **Mr. Nizar Farsakh**

Teaching Fellow  
Kennedy School of Government  
Harvard University  
Email: [theniz74@gmail.com](mailto:theniz74@gmail.com)

Mr. Nizar Farsakh was a teaching fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School assisting Professor Marshall Ganz in "Public Narrative and Community Organizing" and Professor Ronald Heifetz on "Adaptive Leadership". Farsakh's training on public narrative is aimed at engaging leaders and focused on initiating citizens to act and induce social change within their communities. He is currently adapting this approach and the leadership courses he took at the Kennedy School to customize them for various audiences. He holds a B.A. and a B.S. from the American University of Beirut, a Masters from the University of London, and a Masters of Public Administration from the Harvard Kennedy School.

## **Presentation and Breakfast**

### **Dr. Deborah Santiago**

Vice President of Policy and Research  
*Excelencia* in Education  
1717 N Street, NW, 2nd Floor  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: (202) 785-7350  
Fax: (202) 785-7351  
E-mail: [dsantiago@edexcelencia.org](mailto:dsantiago@edexcelencia.org)

Dr. Deborah A. Santiago is the co-founder and Vice President for Policy and Research at *Excelencia* in Education and has spent more than 15 years leading research and policy efforts from the community to national levels to improve educational opportunities and success for all students. Her current research focuses on state and federal policy, financial aid, effective institutional practices, and student success in higher education. She has been cited in numerous publications, including *The Economist*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, AP, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Ed*, and *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*. She serves on the board of the Latin American Youth Center (DC) and the National Association for College Admission Counseling. Dr. Santiago also serves on the advisory boards of Univision's Education Campaign and the Pathways to College Network.

## **Session II: College and Career Ready System Development and College Completion**

### **Hon. Ana Sol Gutiérrez**

Board Member, NALEO  
Maryland State Delegate  
6 Bladen St., Rm. 220  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
Phone: (301) 858-3181  
Fax: (301) 858-3232  
E-mail: [ana.gutierrez@house.state.md.us](mailto:ana.gutierrez@house.state.md.us)

The Hon. Ana Sol Gutiérrez is a member of the NALEO Board of Directors. Delegate Gutiérrez was the first Latina elected to the Maryland House of Delegates in November 2002. She has served on the House Appropriations committee and its Health & Human Resources subcommittee, Oversight Committee on Pensions and Judiciary Committee and its Juvenile Justice subcommittee. Most recently, she was appointed to the NCSL's National Dropout Prevention Task Force based on her successful model legislation on accurately calculating and reporting high school graduation rates. She is a founding member of the New Americans Caucus, a group of Maryland lawmakers formed in 2008 to counter a growing anti-immigrant sentiment in the Maryland General Assembly. In 1994, she was appointed by President Clinton as the Deputy Administrator for Research and Special Programs at the U.S. Department of Transportation. She has twice been recognized among the 100 Most Influential Hispanics in the US by *Hispanic Magazine*, and twice named among Maryland's Top 100 Women by the *Daily Record*. Delegate Gutiérrez received her bachelor's from Pennsylvania State University and a Master in Technology of Management, Scientific & Technical Information Systems from American University. She did postgraduate studies in Applied Engineering at George Washington University, and Executive Management at the JFK School of Government at Harvard University.

**Mr. Kevin Days**

Associate Director for Postsecondary Engagement  
Achieve  
1400 16th Street NW, Suite 510  
Washington, DC 20036-2256  
Phone: (202) 419-1540  
Fax: (202) 828-0911  
Email: [Kdays@achieve.org](mailto:Kdays@achieve.org)

Mr. Kevin Michael Days joined Achieve in June 2011 as the Associate Director for Postsecondary Engagement. Previously, he served as Learn and Serve America's Advisor for Higher Education Special Initiatives at the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency charged with supporting national service. Before moving to the DC metro area, he was the first Executive Director of the New York Campus Compact, a consortium of 50 New York State colleges and universities dedicated to revitalizing the public service mission of higher education. Mr. Days has served as the Executive Director of the Booker T. Washington Community Center (BTW) in Auburn, New York. He was elected to the Board of Education for the Auburn Enlarged City School District in May 2001 and served as Vice President during the last year of his term. He received his undergraduate degree in History from SUNY Plattsburgh and a Master's degree in American History from Cornell University where, as a doctoral candidate, he worked on a dissertation that studied African American race films made in the early twentieth century.

**Ms. Dominique Raymond**

Director of Alliance State Relations  
Complete College America  
1250 H Street NW, Suite 850  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: (202) 349-4148  
Fax: (202) 355 - 0295  
Email: [draymond@completecollege.org](mailto:draymond@completecollege.org)

Ms. Dominique Raymond leads Complete College America's outreach, advocacy and communications with the Alliance of States, serving as a primary point of contact for state leadership teams. Across her career, she has developed expertise in implementing statewide education policy initiatives that increase academic achievement, particularly among underserved students. She has served in two states as a special assistant to an education secretary, and previously as a higher education policy analyst and pre K-16 workgroup co-chair. She has also worked as a state outreach coordinator in multiple states for a national education policy organization on college and career readiness, an undergraduate advisor at a public flagship university, and a program assistant at a city university's division of continuing education. She has been responsible for signature initiatives on college and career success, higher education access and success grants, aligning pre K-16 and workforce policies, providing digital media content statewide to classrooms and outreach to business, community-based and economic development organizations. She holds a Bachelor's degree from Northwestern University.

### **Session III: College Readiness, Early College High Schools and College Completion**

#### **Hon. Raquel Regalado**

Board Member, NALEO  
Board Member, Miami-Dade County Public Schools  
1450 NE 2nd Avenue  
Miami, FL 33132  
Phone: (305) 995-1000  
Email: [rregalado@dadeschools.net](mailto:rregalado@dadeschools.net)

Board Member Raquel Regalado represents School Board District 6, which encompasses the areas of Key Biscayne, the Roads, East Little Havana, Shenandoah, Silver Bluff, Coconut Grove, Coral Gables, South Miami and East Kendall. Board Member Regalado is Chair of the Miami-Dade County School Board's Innovation, Efficiency and Governmental Relations Committee and is a member of the Miami-Dade County School Board's Instructional Excellence and Community Engagement Committee. In June, 2011 she was named to the Board of Directors of NALEO (National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials). She attended Miami-Dade Community College and then Florida International University where she earned a degree in Liberal Studies with honors. Ms. Regalado then went on to earn a Juris Doctorate degree from St. Thomas University School of Law. Currently, she is Counsel for the nationwide intellectual property law firm of Feldman Gale. Ms. Regalado was named a Rising Star in Intellectual Property Litigation by Florida Trend and was a recipient of the 2009 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, 40 outstanding attorneys in Miami-Dade County under 40.

#### **Dr. Pepe Barron**

Chief Executive Officer and Superintendent  
Luz Guerrero Early College High School  
2797 N Introspect Drive  
Tucson, AZ 85745  
Phone: (520) 623-8188  
Fax: (520) 623-9291  
Email: [pbarron@luzsocialservices.org](mailto:pbarron@luzsocialservices.org)

*Biography not available.*

#### **Dr. Joel Vargas**

Vice President, High School Through College  
Jobs for the Future  
88 Broad Street, 8th Floor  
Boston, MA 02110  
Phone: (617) 728 - 4446  
Fax: (617) 728 - 4857  
Email: [jvargas@jff.org](mailto:jvargas@jff.org)

Dr. Joel Vargas is Vice President of High School Through College at Jobs for the Future. In addition to leading the high school through college work he also researches and advises on state policies to promote improved high school and postsecondary success for underserved students. He has helped policymakers and intermediary organizations develop state and federal policies that expand early college schools and other school designs incorporating college coursework into high school. Since joining JFF in 2002, Dr. Vargas has designed and implemented a research and state policy agenda for implementing early college designs; created policy frameworks, tools, and model legislation; written and edited white papers, research, and national publications; provided technical assistance to state task forces and policy working groups; served on a number of national advisory groups; and organized and presented at national policy conferences. Dr. Vargas has directed, initiated, and studied a variety of middle school and high school programs designed to help more underrepresented students get into and through a postsecondary education. He is co-editor of two JFF books: *Double the Numbers: Increasing Postsecondary Credentials for Underrepresented Youth* (Harvard Education Press) and *Minding the Gap: Why Integrating High School with College Makes Sense and How to Do It* (Harvard Education Press). He received a B.S. in journalism from Boston University and an Ed.D. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

#### **Session IV: Addressing the Affordability Crisis and College Completion**

##### **Hon. Ricardo Lara**

California State Assemblymember  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 94249  
Phone: (916) 319 - 2050  
Fax: (916) 319 – 2150

Assemblymember Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens) represents the 50th Assembly District. He is chairman of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLAC). He serves on the important Appropriations Committee as well as the committees on Banking and Finance, Higher Education, and Water, Parks, and Wildlife. A steadfast advocate for educational equity, Assemblymember Lara worked on numerous legislative initiatives prior to being elected to serve in the Assembly. These included bringing additional resources for English language learner students; legislation to create fair university admission policies, as well as the passage of the landmark Assembly Bill (AB) 540, making college education more affordable for immigrant students by allowing them to pay in-state tuition at California's Colleges and Universities. Prior to serving in elected office, Assemblymember Lara served as a member of the Los Angeles County's Consumer Affairs Commission. A major part of his work on the commission focused on preventing scam artists from preying upon seniors, college students, and immigrants. He volunteers his time with Kiwanis International of Downey, Noon Lions Club of Bellflower and the Optimist and Rotary Clubs in the city of South Gate. He earned Bachelor of Arts degrees in Journalism and Spanish, and a minor in Chicano/a Studies at San Diego State University and is working on his Master of Arts Degree in Leadership from the University of Southern California.

##### **Ms. Lauren Asher**

President  
The Institute for College Access and Success  
405 14th Street, 11th Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612  
Phone: (510) 318-7900  
Email: [Lasher@ticas.org](mailto:Lasher@ticas.org)

Ms. Lauren Asher is president of the Institute for College Access & Success. The Institute is home to the Project on Student Debt, which Ms. Asher co-founded in 2005. After serving in senior positions at the Kaiser Family Foundation, National Partnership for Women & Families, and the U.S. Department of Labor, she led Asher Policy Consulting from 2002 to 2005. Her clients included foundations and national, state, and local nonprofits working to improve the lives of children, youth, and working families. She holds an M.P.A. from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and a Bachelor of Arts from Brown University.

##### **Dr. Jose Cruz**

Vice President for Higher Education Policy and Practice  
The Education Trust  
1250 H Street, N.W., Suite 700  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
Phone: (202) 293 - 1217  
Fax: (202) 293-2605  
Email: [jcruz@edtrust.org](mailto:jcruz@edtrust.org)

Dr. Jose Cruz is Vice President for Higher Education Policy and Practice at The Education Trust. Prior to joining Ed Trust he was Vice President for Student Affairs at the University of Puerto Rico System (UPR) and he oversaw admissions, financial aid, and student-life programs. He also served as UPR's Executive Director for strategic planning and cofounded Puerto Rico's K-16 Council. Dr. Cruz is a former professor and chair of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department and as Dean of Academic Affairs of the UPR Mayagüez campus and led several research projects with significant K-12 STEM student outreach and teacher training components. He earned a doctorate in electrical engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

## **Breakfast Presentation & Remark: Update on Federal and State Dream Act Proposals**

### **Ms. Adey Fisseha**

Policy Attorney and Campaign Coordinator  
National Immigration Law Center  
1444 Eye Street NW, Suite 1110  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: (202) 216-0261  
Email: [Fisseha@nilc.org](mailto:Fisseha@nilc.org)

Ms. Adey Fisseha is a Policy Attorney and Campaign Coordinator at the National Immigration Law Center. She monitors, analyzes, and provides recommendations on federal legislative developments affecting immigrants, particularly in the area of immigration law. Prior, to rejoining NILC in the fall of 2008, she was a fellow at Manhattan Legal Services, representing low-income New Yorkers in consumer debt issues. Before attending law school, she was a NILC Policy Analyst. Her previous experience includes working as a legislative aide to Representative Howard Berman. She holds a Juris Doctorate from the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law.

### **Ms. Gaby Pacheco**

Project National Coordinator  
United We Dream  
Washington, D.C.  
Phone: (202) 503-4229  
Email: [Gabypacheco1@gmail.com](mailto:Gabypacheco1@gmail.com)  
Website: [endourpain.com](http://endourpain.com)

Ms. Gaby Pacheco is the Education not Deportation (END) Project National Coordinator for the United We Dream network. END is a project that seeks to stop the deportation of DREAM Act eligible youth. She is an undocumented student leader from Miami, Florida who wants to be musical therapist and work with children with autism and down-syndrome. She has an AA in Music Education, an AS in Early Childhood education, and a Bachelor of Arts in Special Education K-12.

## **Session V: Institutional Quality and College Completion**

### **Hon. Juan Pichardo**

Rhode Island State Senator  
Rhode Island State Capitol, Ste. 209  
Providence, RI 02903  
Phone: (401) 461 - 2389  
Email: [pichardo@rilin.state.ri.us](mailto:pichardo@rilin.state.ri.us)

On January 7, 2003, Juan M. Pichardo was sworn in as a State Senator representing the 2nd Senatorial District in the State of Rhode Island. He is Senate Pro-Tempore and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance. In addition, Senator Pichardo serves on the Health and Human Services Committee. Senator Pichardo had a 17-year career at the largest health care facility in Rhode Island, RI Hospital/Lifespan, where he held several positions. While at RI Hospital, he became a Patient Financial Advocate where he assisted and provided personal guidance to patients and families and helped them obtain Medicaid, Social Security Insurance benefits, and community free care services. Senator Pichardo served in the 143rd Military Security Force as a Security Police Specialist. He holds an Associate's Degree in Arts from the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), an Associate's Degree in Applied Science Audio Visual Production Services from the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF), and has completed the Air National Guard NCO Academy on September 2003. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Rhode Island College.

**Dr. Magdalena Martinez**

Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs  
Nevada System of Higher Education  
5550 W. Flamingo Road, Suite A2  
Las Vegas, NV 89103  
Phone: (702) 522 – 7070  
Fax: (702) 522 - 7077  
E-mail: [magdalena\\_martinez@nshe.nevada.edu](mailto:magdalena_martinez@nshe.nevada.edu)

Dr. Magdalena Martinez is Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs for the Nevada System of Higher Education. Prior to joining the Nevada System of Higher Education, Dr. Martinez worked at the National Forum of Higher Education for the Public Good at the University of Michigan. This initiative looks at the role of higher education and the public good by examining the intersection of leadership, policy, and cultural practices. In her role she was responsible for contributing to the research, planning and implementation of multiple national dialogues which focused on issues related to postsecondary access, equity, and student success. In addition, she served as a program evaluator for a three-year, W.K. Kellogg Foundation funded leadership program to prepare individuals for the presidency at Minority Serving Institutions (HBCUs, HSIs, TCUs). The program was spearheaded by the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education (an Institute for Higher Education Policy initiative in collaboration with NAFEO, HACU, and AIHEC). She holds a Ph.D. in Education from the University of Michigan, Master of Education from Harvard University, and a Bachelor of Science in Business from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

**Dr. Juliet Garcia**

President  
University of Texas at Brownsville  
80 Fort Brown  
Brownsville, Texas 78520  
Phone: (956) 882-8200  
Email: [julietv.garcia@utb.edu](mailto:julietv.garcia@utb.edu)

Dr. Juliet V. García joined The University of Texas System as the President of The University of Texas at Brownsville (UTB) in January 1992 after having served as President of Texas Southmost College (TSC) for six years. When she was named as President of TSC in 1986, she became the first Mexican-American woman in the nation to become President of a college or university. Under Dr. García's leadership, the budget has increased from \$31.4 million to \$145 million, and the total fall enrollment has grown from 7,358 students to 17,189 students, an increase of 133 percent. She served as Chair of the Advisory Committee to Congress on Student Financial Assistance and on the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. She served as chair of the American Council on Education (ACE), the largest higher education association in the nation, and participated in ACE's South Africa Project. Dr. García currently serves on the boards of Ford Foundation, the Public Welfare Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Humanities Texas, and Raise Your Hand Texas. She is also currently serving as the co-chair of the Notre Dame University Task Force: On the Participation of Latino Children and Families in Catholic Schools in America. Among the many honors Dr. García has received for her work is induction into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame for Lifetime Achievement in Education and the Hispanic Heritage Award. She also received the Reginald V. Wilson Diversity Award from the Office of Minority Affairs from the American Council on Education. She was named one of the Top 10 College Presidents by Time Magazine, Hispanic Business Magazine recognized her multiple times in their 100 Most Influential Hispanics annual publication, and she is featured in the book, *Texas Wise Women Speak*. In her home community she has received much recognition including the naming of a middle school in her honor. Dr. García earned a Ph.D. in Communications and Linguistics from The University of Texas at Austin and an M.A. and Bachelors in Classical Rhetoric and Public Address and English from the University of Houston.