

The **GSC** and **CECE**  
Proudly Present:

# Virtual Graduate Studies Summit

Recorded on:  
Saturday, October 2nd, 2021

**Sponsored by:**



CSU Bakersfield  
Center for Career Education and Community Engagement



CSU Bakersfield  
Graduate Student Center

# Table of contents:

Schedule of events .....	3-5
Guest Speaker Biographies.....	6
Speaker Biographies .....	7-12
Alumni Biographies .....	13-16
Production Team Biographies.....	17-21



**CALIFORNIA STATE  
UNIVERSITY,  
BAKERSFIELD**

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## 9:00 am - Welcome Remarks

- Emcee - Dr. Debra Jackson
- Guest speakers:
  - **Dr. Lynnette Zelezny**
  - **Dr. Vernon Harper**



## 9:15 am - Graduate Program Alumni Panel

- Emcee - Dr. Debra Jackson
- Moderator - Dr. Luis Vega
- Alumni speakers:
  - **Traco Matthews (MBA)**
  - **Dr. Rabia Sohail (EdD)**
  - **Dr. Greg Gordon (MS Geology)**
  - **Denisse Silva (MS in Counseling Psychology)**
  - **Hobert Gabuat (MSW)**
  - **Estrella Amaro-Jeppesen (MA in Spanish)**
  - **Deon Danehy (MPA)**
  - **Jennifer Paulsen (MA in History)**



10:30 am - Finding the Right Program for You

- Emcee - Dr. Jackson
- Speaker - Katrina Gilmore



11:30 am - Discovering CSUB's Graduate Program

- Emcee - Dr. Vega
- Speaker - Adrienne Silva



12:00 pm - Soliciting Strong References

- Emcee - Dr. Jackson
- Speaker - Ms. Catherine Robles



12:30 pm - Crafting a Winning Personal Statement and Resume/CV

- Emcee Dr. Jackson
- Breakout rooms featuring:
  - **Dr. Carol Dell' Amico - Humanities**
    - Eileen Díaz, Emcee
  - **Dr. Richard Zamora - Social Sciences**
    - Jennifer Paulsen, Emcee
  - **Dr. Michael Szolowicz - Education**
    - Valari Kirkbride, Emcee
  - **Dr. Amber Stokes - Natural Sciences**
    - Martha Manriquez, Emcee
  - **Dr. Sumita Sarma - Business**
    - Dr. Luis Vega, Emcee
  - **Dr. Mahmoud Suleiman - Educational Leadership**
    - Logan Reifsteck, Emcee



## 1:30 pm - Preparing for Graduate/Professional School Testing

- Emcee - Dr. Jackson
  - **LSAT - Dr. Jeanine E. Kraybill (Pre-recorded)**
    - Dr. Vega, Emcee
  - **GRE - Adrienne Silva (Pre-recorded)**
    - Eileen Díaz, Emcee



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## 2:30 pm - Funding Graduate School

- Breakout rooms featuring:
  - Kimber Wellman
    - Jennifer Paulsen, Emcee



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## 2:30 pm - Information for International Students

- Breakout rooms featuring:
  - Andrew Dickenson
    - Katrina Gilmore, Emcee



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## 3:00-3:30 pm - Final Q & A

- Emcee - Dr. Jackson & Dr. Vega
- Speakers:
  - **Dr. Sarma**
  - **Dr. Suleiman**
  - **Dr. Stokes**
  - **Dr. Szolowicz**
  - **Dr. Zamora**
  - **Kimber Wellman**
  - **Andrew Dickenson**



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## 3:30-3:45 pm - Closing Remarks with our CSUB Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Debra Jackson

- Emcee - Dr. Vega
- Speaker - Dr. Jackson

# Guest Speaker Biographies



**Lynnette Zelezny, Ph.D., M.B.A.**, was appointed to serve as the fifth president of California State University, Bakersfield, effective July 1, 2018.

Dr. Zelezny is the first woman to serve in the role. A product of the CSU, Zelezny earned bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology from Humboldt State University, a Ph.D. in applied social psychology from Claremont Graduate University and an M.B.A. with distinction from the Craig School of Business at Fresno State. She has also earned professional certificates in management from Harvard University and in executive leadership from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania.



**Dr. Vernon B. Harper Jr.** is the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at CSU Bakersfield (CSUB). As the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Harper oversees the entire academic division including seven administrative units, four academic schools, the Antelope Valley campus and approximately sixty percent of the university's budget. Dr. Harper has led numerous important initiatives to raise the university's academic profile, foster community collaborations and improve student success. Recently, Dr. Harper has led a revolutionary partnership with a local community college to improve transfer articulation and graduation rates.

# Speaker Biographies



## Carol Dell'Amico, PhD

Dr. Carol Dell'Amico has been teaching in the English Department at CSUB since 2005 and regularly advises her MA students on how to apply for Ph.D. programs.



## Andrew Dickenson

Andrew Dickenson is currently the **Athletics & International Admissions Coordinator** here at CSUB.

Prior to this appointment, Dickenson served as the Asst. Director for Academic Advising in the Kegley Center for Student-Athletes here on campus.

Dickenson originally hails from Hampton Roads, Virginia and has been apart of the Bakersfield Community coming up on 3 years in November.

Dickenson received both his Bachelors & Masters Degree from Hampton University in the major of Sports Administration with a concentration in organizational business leadership. Dickenson is a proud member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated and enjoys servicing the community as well as helping students learn about higher education.

**Linkedin:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/andrew-dickenson-067244b2>





### **Katrina Gilmore, MS**

Katrina earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and a Master of Science degree in Educational Counseling at CSU Bakersfield.

She works directly with faculty, staff, employers and community partners as the Director at the CSUB **Center for Career Education & Community Engagement**.

This work includes coordinating and supervising counseling staff, counseling students and alumni on career education topics, providing technology support for online career management systems (Handshake) and managing academic internship placement data for the campus.

**Linkedin:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/katrina-gilmore-37866617/>



### **Jeanine E. Kraybill, PhD**

Dr. Kraybill is an Associate Professor of Political Science and the Director of the Pre-Law Program at California State University, Bakersfield.

**Website:** <https://jeaninekraybillphd.com/>



### **Catherine Robles, MS**

Catherine Robles was recently hired on as a NSME lecturer. Robles earned an associates degree in mathematics and science from Taft College, and she earned a B.S. (minor in Chemistry) and M.S in **Biology** from CSUB in fall 2020.

Robles will teach the Perspectives in Biology course as well as a lab section of integrated life science.

As a student, Robles participated in the Kern Students for Medicine club and the Graduate Student club. She also volunteered at Mercy Southwest.

She highly commends the academic experience she had at CSUB, and she is looking forward to the inspiring people she will meet throughout her new academic career.



**LinkedIn:** [www.linkedin.com/in/catherine-robles-7abbba204](https://www.linkedin.com/in/catherine-robles-7abbba204)



### **Sumita Sarma, PhD**

Dr. Sumita Sarma is an Assistant Professor of Management at California State University, Bakersfield and Director, BREC (Business Research & Education Center). She received her PhD in Entrepreneurship and Innovation from the University of Missouri Kansas City.

Prior to her PhD, Dr. Sarma had extensive industry work experience in multi-functional roles in multiple locations. Before joining the industry, she completed her Bachelor of Engineering in Electronics and Telecommunications (University topper and Gold Medalist) in India, and her Master's from France.

Dr. Sarma has lived, studied, and worked in three countries – USA, France, and India, and has accumulated rich industrial work experience in these countries. (continued on page 10)



### **Sumita Sarma, PhD (continued)**

Her main teaching and research interests include entrepreneurship and innovation, and strategic management.

Dr. Sarma has published her research in different management journals such as the Asia Pacific Journal of Management, Business Horizons, Entrepreneurship Research Journal, Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, and Journal of International Consumer Marketing on areas of entrepreneurship and firm-level strategies.

She has presented her research papers at prestigious national and international-level conferences such as the Academy of Management, Babson Conference, Sustainability Ethics and Entrepreneurship, and USASBE.

Dr. Sarma is a member of the Academy of Management and Strategic Management Society and has served as ad-hoc reviewer for multiple journals such as Research Policy, Journal of Small Business Management, Asian Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, Asian Journal of Management Science and Applications, and Academy of Management.

**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sumita-sarma-pmp-ph-d-38478117>



### **Amber Stokes, PhD**

Is an Associate Professor in the **Department of Biology**. She has been instructing since 2013. Her research focus is on chemical ecology and animal physiology. She is also the Graduate Program Director for the department, and dedicated to helping students succeed in graduate school.

**Instagram:** [https://www.instagram.com/ttx\\_girl/](https://www.instagram.com/ttx_girl/)

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/ttxgirl>

**Research Gate:**

<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Amber-Stokes-2>





### **Mahmoud Suleiman, PhD**

Dr. Mahmoud Suleiman is a professor of Teacher Education and the Interim Director of the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership at California State University, Bakersfield.

During his tenure at CSUB, Dr. Suleiman has served as Director of the Multiple Subject Credential Program and as Chair of the Teacher Education Department.



### **Dr. Michael Szolowicz**

Michael Szolowicz currently serves as Co-Director of the **Educational Administration (EDAD) Credentialing and Masters** program. He is also an Assistant Professor in the EDAD program teaching visionary leadership and field experience, and is a core faculty member of the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership teaching educational reform and applied theories of justice.

He is a former high school principal whose current research focuses on the politics of educational change. He is published in the Teachers College Record, Educational Administration Quarterly, and Educational Policy Analysis Archives.



**LinkedIn: Michael Szolowicz, Ph.D. | LinkedIn**  
**@csubedadmin** on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter



### **Kimber Wellman**

BA Phil, MPA

Scholarship Coordinator and Financial Aid Advisor at CSUB



## Rich Zamora, PhD

Dr. Zamora is an assistant professor in the **Counseling Psychology Program** housed within the Department of Psychology at California State University of Bakersfield. He is also a licensed clinical psychologist in the state of California.

The scientist-practitioner model has been a vital aspect of his professional identity as a counseling psychologist. He is interested in how cultural factors affect experiences, relationships, success, and well-being. A core line of research for him is understanding the romantic relationship experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals.

In addition, he is also highly interested in further understanding the lived experiences of college students who come from underrepresented backgrounds including but not limited to: first generation college students, students of color, low SES, and students who have been marginalized due to their social identities.

Furthermore, he is also interested in understanding the intersectionality of multiple identities and how this impacts well-being and academic success. Lastly, his extensive training in the scientist-practitioner model also informs his efforts to mentor and supervise counseling trainees in conducting research in training and counselor development.

# Alumni Biographies

## Estrella Amaro-Jepesen, MA

Estrella Amaro-Jepesen holds a BA in History from UC Riverside and an MA in Spanish from CSUB.

She is the Cultural Competence/Ethnic Services Manager for Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services.

In her free time, she conducts interdisciplinary research on ethnic representation in the arts, sociolinguistics, and medical Spanish. For self-care, she likes dancing, video editing, and singing to jazz music.

Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services website: [kernbhers.org](http://kernbhers.org)

KernBHRS Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/KernBHRS>

KernBHRS Instagram page: <https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/kernbhers/?hl=en>

KernBHRS Twitter Page: @KernBHRS

## Deon Danehy, MPA

Deon Danehy received a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and a Masters in Public Administration from CSUB, and he is currently an operations manager for a mental health clinic. He has also volunteered in the Bakersfield community in all areas of healthcare.





## Hobert Gabuat, MSW

Hobert Gabuat is a Clinical Social Worker and CSUB Alum.

As a child, he emigrated to the United States from the Philippines and currently resides in San Luis Obispo (SLO) County. After battling poverty and adversity, Gabuat graduated from high school and joined the military at 17.

Gabuat completed tours in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Ukraine; after completing these tours he then turned to higher education. Like many students, Gabuat endured the sometimes-crippling effects of Imposter Syndrome and hesitated toward pursuing a higher education.

Gabuat persevered and earned his bachelor's degree in Management with an emphasis in Leadership and a master's degree in **Social Work**.

Gabuat has combined his love for education and dedication to the military and now uses his degrees to positively affect military personnel and their families through mentorships, Drug and Alcohol Counselor, Mental Health Evaluator, and Clinical Social Worker in SLO county.

Gabuat credits his education for taking him to new heights,; professionally and personally. Gabuat says "I am learning so much in my field but the greatest thing I have learned so far is that no matter what I do, my education will never be taken from me!"





### **Gregory Gordon, PhD**

Gregory Gordon is a geologist working in California's petroleum industry. He is a proud alumnus of CSUB (M.S., 2009), where he was honored as Outstanding Graduate Student in **Natural Sciences & Mathematics**.

He went on to earn his Ph.D. in Geology from the Colorado School of Mines. Gregory was recognized as a CSUB Alumni Rising Runner in 2020, and he has taught undergraduate & graduate classes in CSUB's Geology Department.

**Linkedin:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/gregory-gordon-33553412>



### **Traco Matthews, MBA**

Traco's purpose and greatest passion is encouraging and coaching others. In addition to coaching employees at work, he teaches business courses at Bakersfield College and California State University, Bakersfield, provides mentoring for leaders on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, and serves as a Social Pastor and community advocate.

He graduated from the University of California, Davis with a bachelor's degree in **Economics** in 2001, and from California State University, Bakersfield, with an M.B.A. in 2017. He is happily married to his wife of 20 years, Dr. Jessica Grimes, a community college administrator.

Bakersfield serves as the home base for their frequent travels and life adventures.



### **Jennifer Paulsen, MA**

In 2016, Jennifer Paulsen earned an A.A. in History from Bakersfield College and transferred to CSUB to earn a B.A. & M.A. in History in 2018 and 2020, respectively.

To complete the master's program, she chose to take three written exams covering the historical perspectives of European History (18th – 20th century), Atlantic History (18th & 19th century), and the American West (19th century).

After completing the M.A. program, she began the single subject credential program, also at CSUB, and is currently a resident history teacher at South High School through the Kern High Teacher Residency program.

In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her son, friends, and family, and she hopes to do lots of traveling in the near future.

**Linkedin:** [www.linkedin.com/in/jdpaulsen](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jdpaulsen)



### **Denisse Silva, MS**

Denisse is a recent graduate of the **Counseling Psychology Program** at CSUB. She is currently an Associate Marriage & Family Therapist at a private practice.

**Instagram:** denissebianedsilva





## **Rabia Sohail, EdD**

Dr. Sohail is a proud alumna of CSU Bakersfield, with a **Master's in Health Care Administration** and **doctorate in Educational Leadership**.

Dr. Sohail has been teaching with the Public Policy and Administration department for the last five years. Her research interests include adolescent health, health education/promotion, academic probation in higher education, and gender barriers in health care organizations.

She was selected as the outstanding student in MS-HCA and later awarded Chancellor Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP).

Dr. Sohail presented her dissertation research in American Educational Research Association (AERA) annual meeting 2021, and is currently serving as a reviewer for AERA 2022 annual meeting.

She recently joined Sunrise Community Center School as the director; this non-profit organization seeks to educate Muslim children to become confident leaders in service to the community.

**Linkedin:** [linkedin.com/in/rabia-sohail-b50b49119](https://www.linkedin.com/in/rabia-sohail-b50b49119)



# Production Team Biographies



## Eileen Díaz

Eileen is a CSUB Alumni and Graduate Student currently enrolled in the Masters in **History Program** at CSUB. She is the first in her family to attend and graduate from a 4-year university; she is also the first to attend graduate school as well.

Apart from her studies, she devotes her time to helping others on campus. She currently works for the Graduate Student Center in providing grad students with the resources they need to ensure their academic success; she also works with the Kegley Institute on campus for an oral history project called "Humanity Beyond Bars;" she also works as a graduate assistant for the Historical Research Center; and as a History tutor for the Arts and Humanities department.



Eileen enjoys helping people reach their goals, and believes with the positions she holds on campus, she has been successful in doing so.

**LinkedIn:** [Linkedin.com/in/eileen-díaz](https://www.linkedin.com/in/eileen-díaz) (be sure to include the accent above the letter i)

**Twitter:** @eileen\_\_diaz



## Debra L. Jackson, PhD

Debra Jackson is a **Professor of Philosophy** and serves as **Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Academic Programs** at CSU Bakersfield. She received her B.A. in Philosophy from Middle Tennessee State University and her Ph.D. in Philosophy from Purdue University. Dr. Jackson's research focuses on epistemological issues regarding gender and race, especially with regard to sexual violence against women. She also serves as Principal Investigator for a 5-year, \$2,797,950 grant, "Promoting Excellence in Graduate Education and Increasing Hispanic STEM Related Degree Completion," from the U.S. Department of Education.



### **Valari Kirkbride, MS**

CSUB Alumnus, 2020. Administrative Analyst/Specialist and Budget Analyst within the **Academic Programs Department**. 16 years experience working in Higher Education.

**Linkedin:** [linkedin.com/in/valari-k-kirkbride](https://www.linkedin.com/in/valari-k-kirkbride)



### **Martha Manriquez**

Martha has been working in the Graduate Student Center for 8 years. She is currently a graduate student in the MA in Spanish program. Her favorite thing about CSUB is the campus community. She enjoys traveling and spending time with family and friends.

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/csubgsc>

**Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/csubgsc/>

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/csubgsc>

**Linktree:** <https://linktr.ee/CSUBgsc>



Location of the **Graduate Student Center** - Numenor Bldg. CSUB





### **Logan Reifsteck**

Logan is a graduate student in the **Educational Counseling program**. He is also an administrative support coordinator in NSME grants and outreach. Logan is from Illinois and is a big Chicago Bears fan.



### **Jay Shyamdasani**

Jay Shyamdasani, is currently a junior majoring in Business Administration.

In his free time, Jay loves swimming, playing cricket, and traveling. Australia is the next place on his destination list.

He is very passionate about opening his own business right after graduating, and he is confident it will flourish in 5 years.





### **Adrienne Silva, MBA**

Adrienne has been working with graduate students since 2018. She enjoys both being a CSUB student for the MPA program and as staff for the Graduate Student Center, which allows her to guide prospective and current graduate students to achieve their career and educational goals.

She has experience working in several different industries and managing a work/school/life balance, which allows her to understand the needs and issues that can arise for many graduate students. Her goal in every meeting is to help you find the best path to achieve your goals!

**Linkedin:**

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/adriannesilva/>

### **Luis Vega, PhD**

Luis Vega, Ph.D. is Professor of Psychology and is currently serving as Interim Associate Dean, Graduate & Undergraduate studies. Dr. Vega has been at CSUB for over 25 years and is a proud product of California's educational system (CC, CSU, UC). Working at CSUB is his dream job and he sees himself in all our students looking for a better tomorrow.

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/csubgsc>

**Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/csubgsc/>

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/csubgsc>

**Linktree:** <https://linktr.ee/CSUBgsc>



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