

ARIZONA

THE WESTERN REGION COUNCIL ON
BLACK AMERICAN AFFAIRS

THE MARICOPA COUNCIL ON
BLACK AMERICAN AFFAIRS



National Council on
Black American Affairs

OCTOBER 10-12
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY FOUR

THE 1ST ANNUAL

**UNAPOLOGETICALLY
BLACK
& EDUCATED**

CONFERENCE AT MESA COMMUNITY COLLEGE



**National Council on
Black American Affairs**

Western Region Council on Black American Affairs in
Partnership with the Maricopa Council on Black American Affairs



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SANKOFA

SANKOFA

"Go Back and Get It"

We should reach back and gather the best of what our past has to teach us so that we can achieve our full potential as we move forward. Whatever we have lost, forgotten, forgone, or been stripped of can be reclaimed, revived, preserved, and perpetuated.



WELCOME FROM THE WESTERN REGION PRESIDENT

Dr. Joel Powell, President, WRCBAA

Welcome to the First Annual Unapologetically Black and Educated (UBE) Conference! On behalf of the Western Region Council on Black American Affairs (WRCBAA), it is my absolute pleasure to greet you as we gather for what promises to be an uplifting, transformative, and unapologetically powerful experience. We're here to celebrate the beauty, brilliance, and resilience of Black scholars and educators—our people, standing tall and claiming our space in higher education.



A charismatic Black poet recently remarked, "They not like us..." The people who doubt the monument of Black talent. The individuals who scoff at the idea of Black excellence, the naysayers who point to problems instead of progress. No, they are not like us. We are individuals who are not burdened by the struggles of our history, we are instead empowered by the lessons they have taught us. We build on our successes, to uplift each other, and to remind ourselves that we belong in every room where decisions are made about the future that our efforts are authoring.

During this conference I want to challenge you to be advocates, and visionaries who become disruptors of the status quo and not only expect more, but demand it – from your leaders and yourself. To echo Michelle Obama, "when you've worked hard, and done well, and walked through that door of opportunity, you do not slam it shut behind you." We are here to hold those doors open for each of our colleagues, our peers and members of our community so that every subsequent generation is more prepared, more supported, and more empowered than the last.

There is no limit to what we can accomplish collaboratively. If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together. Thank you for being part of this incredible journey. Together, we are unapologetically Black, educated, and ready to lead. I can't wait to see the magic we'll create together over these next few days.

In Solidarity

Dr. Joel Powell

President, WRCBAA

GREETINGS FROM MARICOPA COUNCIL ON BLACK AMERICAN AFFAIRS (MCBAA)

Dr. Michelle Traveler, President, MCBAA

On behalf of the Maricopa Council on Black American Affairs (MCBAA), it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2024 Unapologetically Black and Educated (UBE) Conference! This gathering represents a powerful and necessary space for Black scholars, educators, and leaders to come together and address the issues that affect our communities, students, and institutions.

This year's theme—Unapologetically Black and Educated—is not just a statement, but a call to action. We are here to celebrate the strength, brilliance, and resilience that we carry as Black people in academia. We know that being Black in educational spaces requires courage, innovation, and a relentless commitment by students, our colleagues, and our communities.



At the UBE Conference, we aim to foster conversations that go beyond surface-level discussions. We're here to build, strategize, and share tools for action that will impact our institutions, empower our students, and challenge the inequities that persist in education. We have much to celebrate and so much more to accomplish.

I encourage you to engage fully in this experience, connect with your peers, and take with you knowledge that strengthens not only your professional journey but also our collective work in advancing Black excellence. We are honored to share this space with you.

Thank you for being here and for all that you do.

Sincerely,
Dr. Michelle Traveler
President, MCBAA


ABOUT THE WESTERN REGION COUNCIL ON BLACK AMERICAN AFFAIRS

The Western Region Council on Black American Affairs (WRCBAA) is an official regional body of the National Council on Black American Affairs (NCBAA), which is an affiliate of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC).

NCBAA evolved over 30 years ago during a time of great social, political, cultural and educational change in the United States. In 1968, an ad hoc Black Caucus was organized during the annual convention of the American Association of Junior and Community Colleges, now AACC to address the changing needs of African Americans in higher education. NCBAA is divided into four regional councils across the United States (North Central, Northeast, Southern, and Western) forming a national organization whereby students, faculty, non-teaching personnel and administrators can work together for a common cause—effective educational opportunities and employment for African-Americans within community college systems.

The WRCBAA is committed to its mission of:

- Improving educational opportunities for Black American students and professional development opportunities for Black American faculty, staff and administrators;
- Developing collaborative relationships with educational, business, and public service institutions with compatible goals;
- Networking to maximize the achievement of career goals for Black Americans within the Community college System; and
- Ensuring the articulation of positions on issues affecting Black Americans in the formulation of policy and decision making.



**“THE CHAMELEON
CHANGES COLOR TO
MATCH THE EARTH, THE
EARTH DOESN'T CHANGE
COLORS TO MATCH THE
CHAMELEON.”**

- Senegalese Proverb

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2024

8:00 a - 4:00 p

REGISTRATION & BREAKFAST

9:00 a - 9:30 a

OPENING SESSION, WELCOME AND MISSION

Dr. Joel Powell
President, WRCBAA



9:30 a - 9:45 a

BREAK

9:45 a - 11:00 a

BREAK OUT SESSIONS

"What They Say vs. What They Do"
Dr. Ada Martin (LB- 145)

"Lift Every Voice"
Dr. Lisa Neely (KSC 116N)

11:00 a - 11:15 a

BREAK

11:15 a - 12:30 p

BREAK OUT SESSIONS

"Who Are You? - Core Values"
John Diggs (LB 300)

"Equality is not Equity"
Dr. Ebony Anderson (HW 858)

12:30p - 1:45p

LUNCH

Dr. Gabriel Johnson
Keynote Speaker



1:45p - 3:00p

BREAK OUT SESSIONS

"The Prison Pipeline Epidemic"
Dr. Pamala Sacks-Lawlar (HW 842)

"They Not Like Us: The Black Classroom Experience"
Dr. Joel Powell (KSC 109)

"What They Say vs. What They Do"

Dr. Ada Martin

In this session Dr. Martin provides a Qualitative Analysis of Failed Racial Redress at Historically White Institutions. Considering the "2020 Summer of Racial Reckoning," where many historically white institutions (HWIs) across the country, in a reactionary manner, started working to address racial disparities within their organizations.

Session Location:

LB 145



"Lift Every Voice: Leveraging Resources & Building Coalitions in Support of Black Student Success"

Dr. Lisa Neely

A presentation and case study on Solano Community College's ambitious 3-year Student Equity and Achievement Plan, showcasing the transformative impact of a race-conscious, anti-racist approach in advancing Black student excellence and success.

Session Location:

KSC 116N



"Who Are You? Identify Core Values and Beliefs to Live Your Best Life"

Mr. John Diggs

Creating an "I Am" mind map is important for college students as it promotes self-awareness, clarity, goal setting, decision-making, personal development, confidence, communication skills, and resilience, all of which are crucial for academic and personal success. Mr. Diggs will share how Mind Mapping can enhance learning, organization and creativity among college students and how it can be incorporated by college leadership to support a structured yet flexible approach to managing coursework, generating ideas, and retaining knowledge.

Session Location:

LB 300



"Cultural Competency: Equality is not Equity"

Dr. Ebony Anderson

Cultural Competency is the explicit intention to serve students from a variety of different cultures and ethnic groups. In order to be a well-rounded higher education practitioner, you must understand the importance of championing equity in all areas of higher education. This session will identify the current gaps in practice in higher learning institutions and provide holistic resources to further serve students and the communities at large. There will be multiple mixed methods discussed such as Critical Race Theory and a variety of equity centered models.

Session Location:

HW 858



"The School to Prison Pipeline: A Public Health Epidemic"

Dr. Pamala Sacks-Lawlar

The educational setting exists to provide instruction to all youth despite their race or gender. To successfully reach these youths the focus must be on the primary needs of those youth and services should be rendered in a pedagogical manner that is culturally relative and addresses the bio-psychosocial needs of those youth. While Black and Brown youth often experience trauma in the school setting, attention is not given to the scars from feeling alienated, encountering discrimination, and emotional abuse in public school remain etched onto their psyche .

**Session Location:
HW 842**



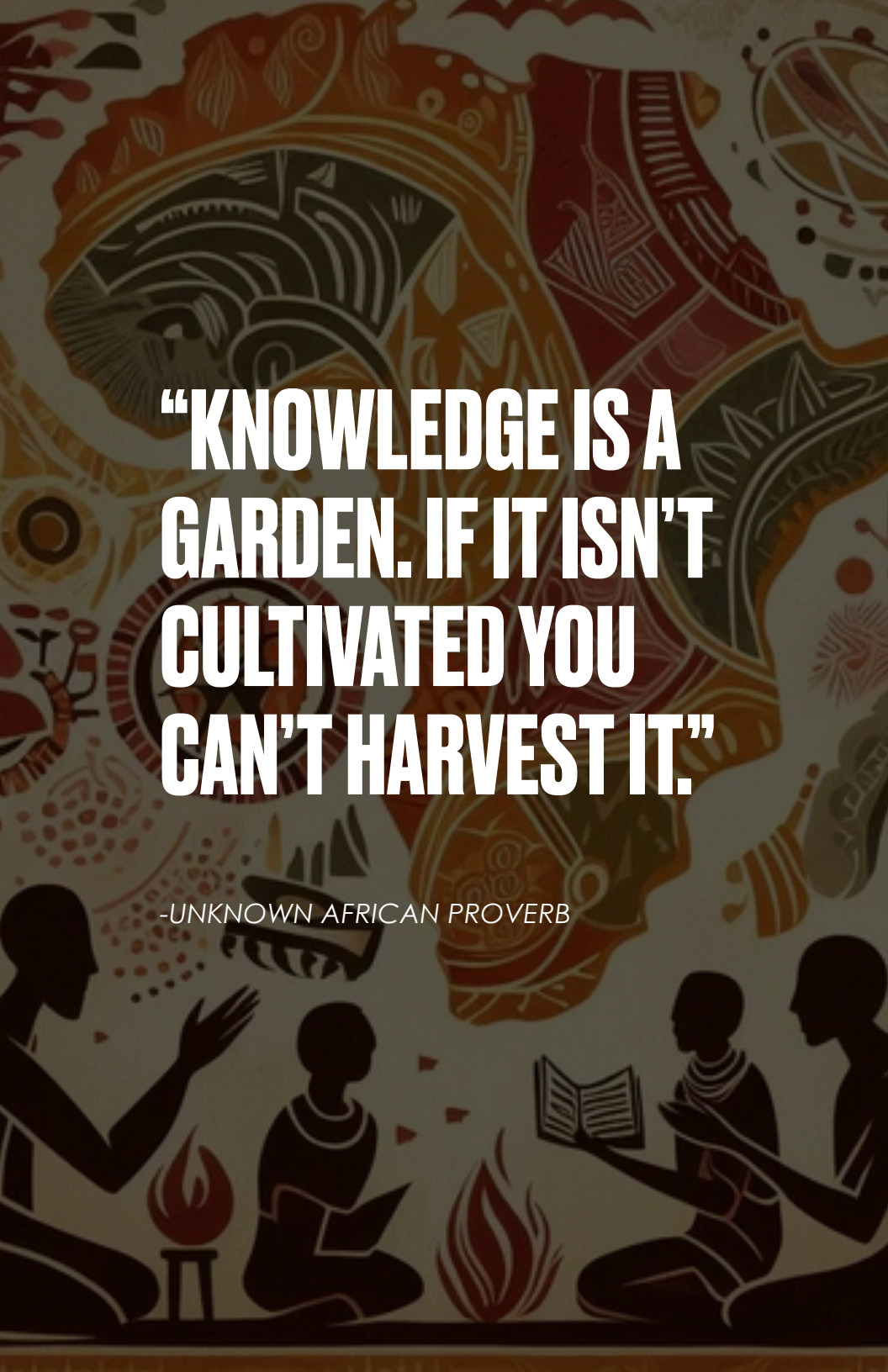
"They Not Like Us: Unleashing the Black Student Vote"

Dr. Joel Powell

This presentation will explore the vital role Black student voters play in the 2024 election. It will highlight how Black students have historically driven progressive change and continue to lead movements addressing systemic inequalities, voter suppression, and social justice. Despite challenges like disillusionment and voter suppression, the collective power of Black students remains crucial for shaping the future. The session will emphasize the importance of mobilizing these voices to influence policies and leadership that will impact their communities for future generations.

**Session Location:
KSC 109**



The background features a complex African artistic style. At the top, a large, stylized face with intricate patterns and a crown-like top is rendered in shades of brown, orange, and red. Below this, the background is filled with various geometric and organic patterns. In the lower portion, silhouettes of four people are shown sitting on the ground. From left to right: a person with hands raised in a gesture, a person holding a book or tablet, a person holding an open book, and another person. Two stylized flames are positioned between the silhouettes. The overall color palette is dominated by earthy tones like brown, orange, and red, with white text and black silhouettes.

**“KNOWLEDGE IS A
GARDEN. IF IT ISN’T
CULTIVATED YOU
CAN’T HARVEST IT.”**

-UNKNOWN AFRICAN PROVERB

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2024

8:00 a - 8:30a

BREAKFAST & CONFERENCE CHECK-IN

8:45 a - 9:05 a

MCBAA ORGANIZATIONAL INVITATION

Dr. Michelle Traveler
President, MCBAA



9:15 a - 10:30a

BREAK OUT SESSIONS

"AI in Higher Education"
Dr. Michelle Traveler
LB 300

10:30a - 10:45a

BREAK

10:45 - 12:00p

BREAK OUT SESSIONS

"Instructing Minority Students
with Dual Exceptionalities"
Dr. Toyka Whitley
HW 858

"Who All Gonna Be There"
Dr. Jazmine Tero
LB 145

12:15p - 1:00p

LUNCH, CLOSING PLENARY, PRIZE & RAFFLE DRAWING

"AI in Higher Education"

Dr. Michelle Traveler

This presentation will define AI's role in higher education, reviewing popular tools used in teaching, learning, and research. Attendees will learn how AI, especially generative AI, enhances personalized learning, plagiarism detection, and data analysis. The session will explore how AI is transforming higher education, presenting both challenges and opportunities for institutions, while serving as a powerful tool to improve learning outcomes and foster critical thinking.

Session Location:
LB 300



"Taking Your Success Abroad"

Mr. Lamont Slater

This presentation will explore the transformative impact of study abroad programs for Black students, highlighting how international experiences can broaden perspectives, enhance career opportunities, and strengthen cultural identity. Attendees will learn about the unique benefits of studying abroad, including exposure to diverse cultures, development of global networks, and the opportunity to challenge stereotypes while gaining valuable life skills. The session will also provide practical advice on accessing scholarships and financial resources, empowering more Black students to take advantage of this enriching opportunity.

Session Location:
KSC 116S



"Instructing Minority Students with Dual Exceptionalities"

Dr. Toyka Whitley

Twice-exceptional learners are individuals who are gifted and disabled. They are often overlooked due to their unique learning abilities. Furthermore, since 2e students are a small population of students, they are often overlooked and may not be diagnosed due to teachers not referring them to gifted education and only referring them to special education services. When it comes to Black and marginalized students, they are often not referred to gifted or honors classes. Now in higher education, what are the characteristics instructors should look out for to support these learners? How should these students be accommodated in an inclusive classroom setting?

Session Location:
HW 858



"Who All Gonna Be There?"

Dr. Jazmine Tero

While students are in college, they encounter common life challenges that impact their overall wellness. Mental health, family based needs, bias, and adjustment difficulties are just some of the concerns. This session will explore the need for higher education professionals to understand how to assist Black students with fundamental problem solving when stigma, family, or society have dissuaded them from seeking help. Black students take advantage of resources at a disproportionately lower rate than their white counterparts. Case Management is a growing field and has been implemented at several colleges to help students navigate barriers they experience in college.

Session Location:
LB 145





**"A SUCCESSFUL PERSON CAN
LAY A FIRM FOUNDATION WITH
THE BRICKS THAT THEIR
ENEMIES THROW AT THEM."**

- ETHIOPIAN PROVERB

CONFERENCE KEYNOTE SPEAKER

DR. GABRIEL JOHNSON

Gabriel Lee Johnson, a proud Minnesotan, is a father, son, husband, friend, and a Dean's Research Associate Postdoctoral Fellow at the Michigan State University School of Social Work. He holds a PhD and a Master of Public Health from the University of Michigan's School of Public Health, a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Davis, and an associate degree from Solano Community College. Gabriel was also a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Policy Research Scholar and a recipient of a National Institutes of Mental Health grant.



With a background that includes working as a 7th-grade math teacher and in harm reduction, Gabriel's passion lies in improving the health and well-being of Black people and fostering stronger community cohesion. His work has spanned the Black diaspora, including mental health advocacy for the LGBT+ community in Kisumu, Kenya, HIV prevention initiatives in the ballroom community, and developing pathways for marginalized undergraduates at the University of Michigan to pursue graduate studies and research careers.

Currently, Gabriel's research focuses on how masculinity, as an intersectional and dynamic social construct, shapes the health of Black men and masculine-of-center individuals. He emphasizes community-driven research that centers the voices of those directly impacted, ensuring they lead the narrative and development of interventions. Gabriel aims to implement his work in schools and community organizations to improve mental health outcomes for Black men and the communities that support them.

2024 UBE CONFERENCE PRESENTERS

DR. ADA MALCIOLN MARTIN

Rio Salado Community College

Dr. Ada Malcioln Martin (she/her/ella) is an Afro-Latina leader who was born and raised in New York City but has lived in Arizona for decades and has spent over 20 years working in higher education in either a leadership, administrative, instructional, or instructional design capacity. She earned her undergraduate degree in Spanish from Arizona State University, her master's in education from the University of Phoenix, and her doctorate in educational leadership from the University of Arizona, graduating with high distinction, as evidenced by her having been nominated for the school's Spring 2024 Outstanding Graduate Student Award. Her dissertation focuses on institutional harm inflicted on Black and Latin@ educators forced to engage in the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts at historically white institutions. Through her scholarship, she aims to disrupt the inherent white supremacy in academia and to center the experiences and voices of Black and Latino educators.



In addition to serving as adjunct faculty in the Counseling Department at Rio Salado Community College, she owns Equitable Learning Solutions, LLC, where she serves as a learning consultant advising organizations and individuals on their instructional design project needs and best practices related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. She is also a wife, mother of two teenagers, writer, and activist.

DR. LISA NEELY

Solano Community College

With a profound commitment to equity and innovation, Lisa Neeley currently leads transformative initiatives as the Vice President of Student Services at Solano Community College in Fairfield, CA. Her leadership ethos emphasizes collaboration, innovative program design, and strategic partnerships, all underpinned by a dedication to excellent, student-centered customer service.



Lisa's educational career spanning over 20 years has positioned her at the forefront of instruction and student services, both domestically and abroad. Before assuming her current position, she served as CTE dean at Solano Community College. Prior to that, she held executive-level positions including Dean of Students, Director of Student Affairs, and Director of Postgraduate programs at MetFilm School, a prominent institution specializing in film, television, and digital media, with campuses in London and Berlin. Early in her career, she taught screenwriting and producing at London Metropolitan University, Royal Holloway College, and MetFilm School. Her international experience and global perspective have contributed to collaborations with industry giants like Google/YouTube and advocacy for educational partnerships worldwide.

Lisa's expertise is a fusion of her experiences in education and the private sector, where she worked on award-winning films as an executive at Warner Bros. and HBO. This unique blend of skills positions her as a dedicated innovator and creative problem-solver.

DR. EBONY ANDERSON

GateWay Community College

Presenter Bio: Dr. Ebony M. Anderson is an educational outreach and professional development expert. She has taught undergraduate studies for over a decade in the community college sector and is currently a graduate professor at Trine University in the College of Business and Technology. Dr. Ebony has years of executive leadership experience and conducted scholarly published writings to contribute to the auto and technological industry. Dr. Ebony recently graduated, obtaining her Doctoral degree in Strategy and Innovation in Business Administration. As the



current Associate Dean of Student Engagement and Retention, her passion and purpose at Gateway Community College is grounded in creating strategy and access to promote equity and inclusion for all in Higher Education; and to develop employee competencies that cultivate an enriched and holistic working environment.

Her life's philosophy is grounded in serving others to reach their highest and best selves while standing in their personal truth.

DR. PAMALA SACKS-LAWLAR

Grand Canyon University & 4th Goal Mentoring and Athletics

Pamala Sacks-Lawlar Ed.D, MHA, CDP is the Co-Founder/Director of Education for 4th & Goal Mentoring and Athletics and an Adjunct Professor of Public Health at Grand Canyon University. She has a Master's Degree in Healthcare Administration and Public Health and recently completed her Doctorate in Education with an Emphasis on Behavior Health. Her dissertation is titled: Differentiating the Behavior Health Disorders Between African American and

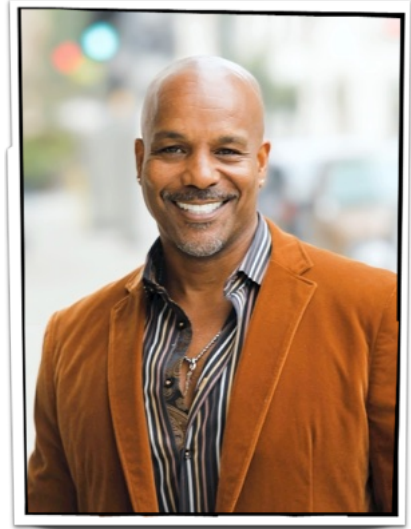


Caucasian Juveniles. Dr. Sacks-Lawlar was the Behavioral Health Administrator and Opioid Disorder Program Director for Juvenile Rehabilitation for the state of Washington for 14 years. She served as the facilitator of the School to Prison Pipeline Symposium for 10 years for the Race and Pedagogy Institute at the University of Puget Sound and is a Certified Diversity Professional and a former member of the Washington State Black Educators Strategies Roundtable. She has 25 years of experience in the field of Substance Abuse Disorders and is a Chemical Dependency Professional, Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist, and Public Health Educator. She is also the convener of Washington State's Annual 'African American Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Summit'.

MR. JOHN DIGGS

Can You Digg It? Inc.

Born in the creative hotbed of Pacoima in northern LA, John Diggs played college football at Washington State University, and went on to play five years of NFL and CFL football before officially retiring. He then built one of Southern California's most outstanding mortgage brokerages before the mortgage meltdown of 2008 forced him to lose that business, followed by his home, his wife, and his family. Going from the highs of success on every front to the low of sleeping on his mom's couch, however, turned out to provide the backdrop for the life-changing idea of using Mind Mapping on a personal level to put his own life back together and to help others do the same.



Since sharing this life changing idea in his TEDx Talk, John has authored six mind mapping books, designed dozens of mind mapping courses, several mind mapping talks, and hosts an online mind mapping community ALL to support his mission to help himself and others boost creativity, enhance memory, facilitate collaboration, increase productivity, and reduce stress to love life more.

DR. JAZMINE TERO

Appalachian State University

Jazmine Tero currently serves as the Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Case Management at Appalachian State University. She has worked at Appalachian for five years including two years in her current role. Jazmine received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Ohio University. She went on to receive her Master of Science in Forensic Psychology from Grand Canyon University, and Master of Arts in Adult Education and Training from University of Phoenix. When it comes to career paths, Jazmine has a variety of experiences in different institutions including the Illinois Department of Corrections, Arizona State Hospital, crisis response, non-profit mental health clinics, college enrollment counseling, housing operations, and case management. She enjoys helping others understand their path in life through overcoming barriers and acknowledging the role they play in their own journey. Her current role provides the opportunity to not only empower students to overcome the stigma of mental health, but also guide staff and faculty through person-centered and trauma-informed approaches to helping students.



DR. TOYKA WHITLEY

Mesa Community College

Originally from Southern California, Dr. T. Whitley relocated to Arizona a couple of years ago. Dr. T is the founder and director of Soul Movers, a nonprofit aiming to empower dancers to pursue their passion for dance while maintaining their faith. Additionally, she established The Christian Dance Hub, a network for Christian dance ministries. In January, she launched a dance ministry magazine, with another issue scheduled for March.

Dr. T. Whitley recently achieved her doctoral degree in Education: Curriculum and Instruction from Liberty University. With a rich background spanning various educational roles across different schools, she also excels in guiding and supporting teachers on inclusive classroom practices. Dr. T's expertise lies in instructional strategies, educational technology, and special education.



DR. MICHELLE TRAVELER

Rio Salado College

Over the past 30years, Dr. Traveler has been an employee of the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD). During that time, she has worked at six of the 10 MCCCD colleges serving in a variety of student success, technology, and faculty roles. Additionally, Dr. Travelers has served as a Computer Basics instructor at the largest high school in the state, Primavera Online High School.



More recently, Dr. Traveler was featured on the first Apple, Inc. Higher Education website, along with 6 other faculty from around the world, for her work with the Apple iOS app development platform and working with diverse populations. She is also a 2016, 2017, 2019, and 2020 Grace Hopper Conference (GHC) Faculty Scholar. She holds an Associate's degree in General Studies, a Bachelor of Science in Justice Studies, an MBA with an emphasis in Information Systems Management, and a Ph.D.in Information Technology with an emphasis in Cloud Computing. Currently, she is the Faculty Chair, for the Computer Technology department at Rio Salado and offers college success resources at: the educationplug.com as an entrepreneur.

DR. JOEL POWELL

Golden West College

Dr. Joel Powell is a full-time Professor of political science and law. He is a native of the San Francisco Bay Area, and continues to enjoy a career in higher education since 2007. He has served as an instructional Dean in the Los Rios Community College District, achieved tenure at two institutions in the state of California, and served in capacities ranging from EEO officer to UMOJA coordinator.



Dr. Powell has an extensive background in developing public policy for government agencies. He has worked with several transportation, aviation, and collegiate school districts developing contract policies for small, local, woman-owned, and disadvantaged business enterprises. He was instrumental in the development and delivery of legal services as a founding member of the John F. Kennedy University, School of Law Elder Law Clinic, and is a current member of both the Western Political Science Association and the American Political Science Association.

Dr. Powell has served as an advisor for Student Government organizations, been a member of academic senate, supported students as an advisor and coordinator for the California LAW Pathway Initiative and was instrumental in developing the first fully online cybersecurity collaborative with Fresno City College and LA Pierce.

He is proud to have served the Western Region Council as Parliamentarian for several years, and now as the President of the region. He is a published author and continues to support the development of interdisciplinary programs aimed at creating achievement opportunities for underrepresented students