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Action

Executive Committee

Educator Preparation Student Liaison

Executive Summary: This agenda item presents possible appointees for an Educator Preparation Student Liaison to the Commission.

Recommended Action: That the Executive Committee select and appoint an Educator Preparation Student Liaison to the Commission.

Presenter: Hai Jue Theriault, Program Analyst, Executive Office

Strategic Plan Goal

III. Communication and Engagement

- a) Maintain and strengthen working relationships with the Commission's diverse stakeholder community.

Educator Preparation Student Liaison

Introduction

This agenda item provides information about the application and selection process for an Educator Preparation Student Liaison to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission). Applicants for the 2022-23 term will be presented for possible appointment by the Executive Committee.

Background

Section 201 of the Commission’s Policy Manual allows for the appointment of a student enrolled in an educator preparation program to serve as a liaison to the Commission for one year beginning on October 1 of the year of appointment. The Educator Preparation Student Liaison will represent the views and experiences of students to the Commission.

Application Process

The application and instructions regarding the application process were circulated to the public, stakeholders, and deans and directors of Commission-approved educator preparation programs at institutions of higher education and local education agencies through email. An announcement that applications were being accepted for the liaison position was also posted on the Commission’s website. Interested parties were instructed to submit the application, verification of current enrollment in an educator preparation program, and an essay of interest to the attention of the Executive Office. The final filing date to submit applications was July 27, 2022; however, the deadline for the position had to be extended to obtain a sufficient number of qualified candidates to interview for the vacancy.

Staff worked with Commissioners Jose Cardenas, Megan Gross, and Kimberly White-Smith to screen applications and interview finalists for consideration by the Executive Committee. Six finalists, listed below, were selected for an interview via Zoom. The essay of interest for each finalist is included in the [Appendix](#). Commissioners Cardenas, Gross and White-Smith will recommend one candidate to the Executive Committee for appointment as Educator Preparation Student Liaison.

Applicant Name	Educator Preparation Program	Credential Goal
Rosabella Lopez	University of the Pacific	Multiple Subject
Kirkum Stevenson	Sonoma State University	Mild/Moderate Education
Sarah Sundermeyer	University of California, Berkeley	Single Subject: Social Science
Ana Tirado Lomas	University of California, Los Angeles	Single Subject: Biology & Chemistry with Computer Science and Bilingual Authorization

Applicant Name	Educator Preparation Program	Credential Goal
Meryssa Tran	University of California, Berkeley	Single Subject: Chemistry
Miguel Vasquez	University of California, Berkeley	Single Subject: History

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Executive Committee select and appoint an Educator Preparation Student Liaison to the Commission.

Appendix

Essay of Interest from Finalists

Rosabella Lopez

Kirkum Stevenson

Sarah Sundermeyer

Ana Tirado Lomas

Meryssa Tran

Miguel Vasquez

Rosabella M. Lopez

2022-2023 Educator Preparation Student Liaison Application Essay

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing plays a key and valuable role in shaping the education system. As a future educator, it would be a great privilege to serve as the Educator Preparation Student Liaison. One of the primary reasons I wish to serve in the commission is to make a meaningful impact as a student representative and as a means to give back to my community. I am determined, dedicated, and responsible. I have experience in community service as well as school leadership involvement in committees and clubs. In addition to organizational and practical skills, I am passionate about The Commission's mission and vision.

As a proud native Californian and Stocktonian, I have always loved being involved in my community. In high school, I participated as an academic mentor and a teacher's aide in my community. I worked with struggling students one-on-one in the classroom. I was also a leader in our Connect Crew Program, to aid freshmen transitioning into high school. As the founding member and president of MEChA, I led meetings and organized community service and celebrations of cultural heritage, helping Chicanos/as learn more about their culture and history, and creating a space where they felt safe. I was the class secretary for our student government in high school. In this position, I wrote the minutes as well as worked diligently to connect the students with our faculty on various topics. Additionally, I spend time out in my community, sharing and teaching Bible principles in order to help others become better citizens in our society. I meet people of different age groups, backgrounds, and cultures. We donate food, clothes, toys, and books to families in need. I hope to continue contributing to a richer community. Richer in the sense of knowledge, compassion, and productivity. I strongly believe our communities will continue to thrive with everyone's motivation and actions while involved in community service. This resonates with the Commission's mission to ensure educators receive high-quality preparation in order to serve diverse students.

Serving as the student liaison will enhance my educational career as I am passionate about teaching, and I understand the importance of certified educators in our community. I come from a family of educators. My grandmother spent 33 years of her life as an educator in Central America and made a strong impact on her students. To this day, many of them keep in contact with her and speak highly of her as their role model and mentor. My sister is a 2nd-grade teacher in California and hearing the joys of teaching has contributed to my excitement to work in the education field. I recognize that teachers do not solely teach, moreover, they inspire. Educators are the pillars of our communities, thus becoming an educator, and making an impact on our next generation, brings me the utmost joy. It is essential for our children to have a solid foundation with loving and compassionate teachers, as I have experienced in my own life. "To teach is to touch a life forever" is a quote I have lived personally and inspires me to do the same.

Throughout my academic career, I have strived to demonstrate the qualities essential for a student liaison. Upon graduating high school amidst the pandemic, I enrolled at a

community college, and I carried a heavy load of units, worked arduously, and graduated with five Associates degrees in one year. This required organizational skills, commitment, self-motivation, and discipline. Additionally, a strength of mine that would be beneficial as a student liaison is communication, as I believe everyone has a voice that should be valued. I communicate with others easily, showing compassion while listening, hence it would be wonderful to be a representative and a voice for my colleagues. My experience helping others and connecting with my peers have revolved around the goal of contributing to a better community.

As a dedicated and diligent college student, I am eager to continue my academic goal of becoming an educator. I feel fortunate to be part of Pacific's educator preparation program to receive quality education to teach young minds in the future. This student liaison position is a great fit for me as I will be able to give of myself while also gaining valuable experience and knowledge and enhancing my skills. I am proud to live in a diverse community and help shape a better tomorrow. It would be a privilege to be a part of like-minded individuals who hope to further improve and ensure excellence in our educators now and those in the future.

To the Commission on Teacher Credentialing,

It is my aspiration to be a voice for the teaching community and advocate for the needs of students in educator preparation programs that struggle with access to resources during a period of high need for educators across all subjects and grade levels. Hundreds of thousands of unfilled teaching positions exist across the country, and California is no exception to this shortage. My perspective is that a central duty of the Educator Preparation Student Liaison will be collaborating to generate ideas that support the shortages throughout many California communities and school districts.

I am a full-time special education teacher with an intern permit at Redwood High School in Marin County while also attending Sonoma State University full-time to pursue my preliminary education specialist credential. I entered this program in the spring of 2022 as a paraeducator in a Counseling Enriched Classroom; a setting that supports students with emotionally based disabilities. I took over the classroom for the 2022-2023 school year, and I am concurrently working while attending classes for my credential. I empathize greatly with many that share this overwhelming predicament of passionately working in schools and studying for a credential in an educator preparation program. I hope to represent this community and act as a champion for their needs in order to promote a perception of teaching that encourages more to want to pursue the field. My assertion is that creating opportunities and providing necessary funding to programs that support credential program students is a key factor in improving the available population of teachers and increasing the longevity of active educators.

On a similar level to that objective, I intend to be a staunch advocate for educational equity for my fellow students. I strive to provide the CTC with the unique perspectives of teachers that have a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Aspiring educators that are disenfranchised and not equally resourced deserve far more of a voice than they currently do. When not properly resourced or advocated for, we begin to see the turnover that many school districts throughout our state are experiencing. As the Educator Preparation Student Liaison, I want a central mission of my role to be advising and creating opportunities for my fellow students that are underprivileged and underrepresented. Synthesizing the issues and needs of students going through a credential program will be a primary concern as their representative. It should be our priority in California to create an equitable system where everyone that desires to work in education has an equal opportunity.

All educators in California are leaders in their community. They deserve acknowledgement and confidence in their representation. A voice that centers around the needs of those who are not sufficiently supported only stands to benefit California educators. The students that commit themselves to these programs have already proven how deeply they feel about serving those around them. My purpose as liaison will be to speak on behalf of impassioned students and quell the concerns that surround education that lead many to abandon this field.

Kirkum Stevenson

Sarah Sundermeyer
September 8, 2022

Dear Executive Committee of the Commission,

My name is Sarah Sundermeyer, and I am a teacher candidate in the UC Berkeley Teacher Education Program. I am studying to earn an MA in Education and a single subject credential in Social Science, with the goal of cultivating joyful, challenging, and equitable classroom and school spaces in Oakland Unified. Not only am I passionate about becoming an effective teacher, but I also want to understand and work to improve California public schools on a systemic level. I hope to serve as the Educator Preparation Student Liaison for the Executive Committee of the Commission in order to authentically represent the voices of student teachers and ensure the quality and rigor of teacher preparation programs in California.

In my personal practice as a history teacher, I seek to build on the roots of Oakland's legacy of social and political change by helping students develop the tools, critical consciousness, and self-awareness to meaningfully transform the conditions of their lives. I chose to become a high school history teacher because I have strong beliefs in the kind of education that youth deserve. Students deserve an education that respects them as whole people. They deserve an education that is meaningful and tied to their family, community, and cultural histories. They deserve to belong, to feel successful, to be supported. And they deserve classrooms that they do not have to recover from.

To reach a vision of education that prepares all students for success within the context of their personal goals and communities, we need thoughtful, self-reflective, and committed teachers who have gone through high-quality teacher education programs. I am interested in contributing to decisions on a statewide level that impact teacher recruitment, retention, and well-being in the profession. The pandemic has laid bare both the imminent challenges and possibilities we face as we work toward the goal of equitably serving every student within the 1100 public school districts in California, and this school year is an opportunity to act.

As the Educator Preparation Student Liaison for the Executive Committee of the Commission, I will be able to provide insight into the experiences and needs of new teachers as we enter a rapidly changing field. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing serves many complex functions, from the issuing, monitoring, and revoking of teaching credentials to the maintenance and implementation of the California Teaching Performance Expectations, and many of these functions affect the day-to-day work of teacher candidates like myself. Guided by curiosity, criticality, humility, and strong communication skills, I am prepared to advocate for equitable policies and procedures that will best serve students, teachers, and communities. I understand that in the current educational climate, there are unique pressures on teacher preparation systems and all of the organizations that wrap around it, and I want to learn more about how the Commission works with educational institutions to meet these competing demands.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to systems-wide decision making in California public schools, and for taking the time to review this application. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Sarah Sundermeyer

Ana P Tirado Lomas

As frontline workers, educators have the potential to embrace diversity in their educational spaces. As a bilingual woman of color, I want to be a STEM educator that represents the ~76% of Latinx students in LAUSD¹. My intersecting identities have shaped my perspective of the world through a critical consciousness lens. Therefore, I see high school STEM education as an opportunity to bridge disparities often found in the STEM field. Regardless, there is still a lack of representation among people of color. I aspire to be an educator that nurtures and supports cultural competence and helps all students develop sociopolitical consciousness in STEM education. I am also aware there are certain limitations and issues that I, along with my peers, will face as novice teachers. New and veteran teachers should feel supported enough by school, district, and state leaders to successfully serve the needs of all their students. For the STEM field to reach its goal of full-inclusion and diversity, education leaders need to address the barriers that minoritized students and teachers face starting at the K-12 level, especially in high schools since they are the feeders to postsecondary institutions. As an aspiring Student Liaison to the Commission, I am committed to addressing our thoughts, experiences, and feedback in efforts to better the experiences of new teachers.

Upon graduating from UC Davis, I had the privilege of working for the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) as a research assistant and enrollment counselor where I got to understand school choices that families make as they try to navigate SFUSD's student choice-based assignment process. Many San Francisco neighborhoods are already segregated by race and ethnicity, and the current choice system in place increases racial segregation compared to a system where all students are assigned to their neighborhood schools. I had the opportunity to work with UC Davis and UC Irvine researchers on collecting data from SFUSD parents to enhance the district's understanding of how parents feel about the enrollment process to create well-informed policy recommendations for reducing inequality in educational attainment. This experience in the seventh-largest urban school district in California gave me new perspectives on how educational policies fail underprivileged students, families, and teachers. I have been learning how to analyze systems of inequality and vow to continue committing myself to take action against these systems as a student teacher and beyond. My experiences with both the micro- and macro- components of school districts and working first-hand with students, parents, and teachers puts me in a unique position to share my valuable feedback to the Commission to better understand the needs of the education community and educator preparation programs.

Taking into consideration my intersecting identities and experiences as a student of color, placement counselor, research assistant, and now student teacher in urban LA, I seek to transform STEM education so that marginalized students can access transformative STEM careers and lives. Having worked in diverse educational settings and taken culturally-relevant

¹ California Department of Education (CDE) through the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) <https://www.ed-data.org/district/Los-Angeles/Los-Angeles-Unified>

courses at UC Davis, such as through my Education and Chicana Studies minors, I learned how western education policies disproportionately impact students of color and teachers themselves. Through UCLA's commitment to combat inequities and racism, I aspire to continue working towards disentangling the systems in our communities and schools that oppress students of color, and hinder their ability to thrive, especially in STEM education. The UCLA Teacher Education Program will grant me the opportunity to engage in scholarly discourse with other like-minded students, who have the drive to promote social justice, humanistic, and instructional equity in LAUSD and beyond. I would appreciate the opportunity to be a voice and representative for my peers to the Commission, to shed light on our unique experiences as student teachers in the Los Angeles Unified and Centinela Valley Union High School Districts.

Tran, Meryssa
Educator Preparation Student Liaison Applicant Essay

Restorative Justice (RJ) is a community-based justice framework and movement that has increasingly been implemented in school policies (Hollweck 2019). Its potential in resolving conflict and addressing student misbehavior has led Bay Area schools to roll out whole school RJ programs since 2005 (Jain 2014). The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) has since incorporated RJ into the California State Teacher Performance Expectations (TPEs) (CTC 2016). Despite the embedding of RJ as an expectation for effective teacher performance in the Bay Area, methodological top-down implementation of RJ training at the teacher education program level is under-assessed and underdeveloped. Additionally, crosstalk between RJ practitioners at the teacher educator program level and partnering school site level is needed for methodological consistency and holistic implementation. It is therefore important to communicate and document the integration and collaboration of RJ practitioner expertise to align with the CTC Mission towards "ensuring integrity, relevance, and high quality preparation of educators to serve diverse populations" (CTC 2022).

My nine month plan aims to integrate a partnership between the newly formed Berkeley Teacher Education Program (BTEP) with resources at the Restorative Justice Center at UC Berkeley. This is rolled out in three phases. Phase I will be towards giving teacher candidates the education and hands-on practice with the center's RJ framework. I have already begun coordinating with Julie Shackford-Bradley, the Coordinator at the RJ Center, who has been seeking to connect with teacher candidates, instructors, and staff at BTEP. I will collaborate with Julie on facilitating multiple RJ training sessions with my teacher candidate cohort, one on the history and fundamental aspects of RJ, and three on issue-specific topics relevant for teachers of diverse populations: responding to racial harms, implicit bias, and reframing conflict as an opportunity for learning. Phase II is nurturing connections between the teacher candidates, the RJ Center and the restorative justice practitioners at our respective school site placements. I will facilitate creating vision and mission statements at the nexus of these connections to ensure that our RJ practices are holistically towards being student-centered. Phase III will be permanently embedding these workshops and connections into BTEP so that this work can continue onto future cohorts. I will coordinate the RJ Center team to build with Thomas Philip and Elisa Salasin, the Senate Faculty Program Director, and Director of Teacher Education respectively, to implement these initiatives into long term goals.

With my background in Transformative Justice (TJ) facilitation, I have demonstrated competence in social justice frameworks as well as coordination to build workshop spaces. Namely, I have built and led workshops for the past two years on building proactive community safety initiatives within my community, some with over twenty people in attendance. In addition, my five years of grassroots community organizing experience allow me to facilitate cross-community base building with minimal guidance. The skills towards building connections between the Vietnamese and Latinx communities in San Jose through my work in VietUnity Bay Area can be transferred toward these visions of holistic RJ implementation through BTEP.

Through the Commission, I am enthusiastic to collaborate with Commission Member Dr. Christopher Davis, who has done elegant work writing grants supporting LGBTQ+ youth programs. Coupled with my experience on fundraising for all-women dance teams, I am confident that our work together can build towards sustaining funds for supporting multiply-marginalized students through RJ initiatives. Please feel free to reach me regarding my achievements in detail, and I hope to contribute my work and experience as an Educator Preparation Student Liaison for the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. Thank you for your consideration.

Works Cited

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As I have progressed through my teacher preparation program at BTEP, I have found myself increasingly interested in finding more avenues towards enacting positive change in California academics. Specifically, I felt the need to find a space that gave my agency a platform at a larger scale beyond the classroom. When my professor informed me about this opportunity and recommended I apply, I knew the position would allow me to follow through on this mission. Working with the CTC will aid my understanding of the system and its nuances that oversee credentialing, accreditation, and credential holder discipline. This experience will grant me valuable knowledge on what CTC expectations for educators are, what these standards are founded in, who and what influences far reaching decisions, and how they are implemented. This knowledge will serve me as an educator at the high school level but even more so as I progress through my career in academia when I decide to enter a PHD program in research, policy, or both. I believe that I will serve as a good candidate for the position due to my teaching experience during and prior to BTEP as I taught in Spain for two years before entering UC Berkeley. I now teach at Coliseum College Preparatory Academy in East Oakland. Also, as a Latino man in a graduate credential program, I offer a unique perspective on the experiences of not only graduate students as a whole but especially those of color who have traditionally struggled to enter higher education and educator programs. As an educator aiming at teaching through a social justice lens, and seeing education as a possible mechanism for social change, I believe it is crucial that more people of color enter education programs and have influence in public discourse especially in a state like California. Historically decisions both within academia and in politics have aided but have also largely deterred academic success for people of color and those in impoverished communities in our state. I believe more diversity in the above-mentioned spheres of influence would aid in supporting those students who have historically struggled and for whom I entered education to support. As such, empowered by my purpose towards public service, I ask that the CTC consider my application and thank you for your time.

Best regards,

Miguel Vasquez
Graduate Student
BTEP - University of California Berkeley