Keeping the Dream Alive 2014
Presenter Biographies

Cynthia N. Armendariz

Cynthia N. Armendariz has worked in higher education for several years, currently she serves as Director of Excel Programs at Metropolitan State University of Denver. She received her bachelor’s degree in Business Management from Metropolitan State University of Denver, master’s degree in Social Work from the University of Michigan, and is currently working on a doctorate degree in College and University Leadership at Colorado State University. Cynthia’s passion and research is focused on the development of programs and strategies to increase Latino matriculation and persistence in higher education.

Laura M. Bohórquez G.

Laura M. Bohórquez García, a native from Mexico City moved to the U.S. at the age of 4 and was raised in Brewster, Washington a small rural agricultural town in Eastern Washington State. Growing up Bohórquez joined her parents in immigrant rights rallies, conferences and in the packing sheds and orchards where her community, family, and herself worked. Through her experiences Bohórquez saw and learned the needs of the immigrant youth in her community and so Bohórquez’s passion for social justice and educational equity lead her to Western Washington University (WWU) where she received a BA in American Cultural Studies and Spanish. At WWU Bohórquez co-created the Raza Latina Studies Minor, participated in M.E.Ch.A and in the Washington Dream Act Coalition as well as graduated as the “Outstanding Graduate” from the American Cultural Studies Department. Her commitment towards the educational equity for undocumented peoples encouraged her to pursue her Master’s in Education from Loyola University Chicago where she implemented a safe space and ally training as well as participated in committees that work to implement and change the policy and practices that serve Loyola Dreamers. Bohórquez currently dedicates her education to advocate for immigrant and educational rights for underrepresented and underserved communities.

Ms. Christian Gonzalez

Christian began with College in Colorado as an Outreach and Access Coordinator for the Denver Metro Region in January 2013. Although she was born and raised in California, she considers Denver her home.

Christian graduated from Montbello High School in 2008 and attended the University of Colorado at Boulder. She became the first person in her family to graduate high school and go to college. In December 2012 she graduated with her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Ethnic Studies with hopes of becoming a high school ethnic studies teacher in the future. During her time at the University of Colorado she worked at the Office of Financial Aid as a peer advisor answering financial aid questions for parents and students, and as an Instructor Assistant at the Student Academic Services Center’s Writing Program. But her true passion was as a Peer Counselor at the Pre-Collegiate Development Program at CU helping students through workshops, presentations and summer programs that prepare them to attend college. The students of Pre-Collegiate motivated her to continue to work with youth and their goals of obtaining a post-secondary degree.

In her free time, she likes to listen to music, watch a ton of hilarious Youtube videos and spend time with her family and her 10-year-old puppy Greg.
**Allison Lusero Hoffman**

Allison has been passionate about working with marginalized groups for most of her professional career. She spent many years working with homeless populations in Denver, most notably at Urban Peak, working with runaway and homeless youth. Allison had an expertise at working with LGBTQ homeless youth and worked with social services agencies to develop best practices at supporting LGBTQ youth. More recently she has been a Post Secondary Options Coach in Mapleton Public Schools where she has worked on building and maintaining college going culture with first generation students. She has advised many undocumented students and families, supporting and advocating for their needs and inspiring them to dream.

**Sylvia T. Martinez**

After growing up in Commerce City, CO & attending Adams City High School, I decided to make the move North to Fort Collins! I completed my Bachelors degree in Spanish and went on to work for the Department of Human Services. After 6 years, I decided that higher education was calling my name! I worked as a financial aid counselor at Colorado State University (CSU) for 7 years. My current role, still within Student Financial Services, is Coordinator for Access. I have the opportunity to work with students around Colorado that are interested in pursuing their educational goals. My experience being a First Generation college student AND a First Generation US citizen help drive my passion for working with students & families. I am the contact person at CSU for current & prospective ASSET students.

**Hans Meyer**

Hans Meyer runs the Meyer Law Office, P.C., which focuses on immigration law and removal defense, criminal defense and postconviction relief, and the immigration consequences of crimes. He is a former trial attorney of four years with the Colorado State Public Defender, where he developed a statewide immigration advisement system. Hans also served the former Public Policy Director for the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition, where he focused on policies and legislation related to immigration enforcement and the criminal justice system.

Hans grew up in Aurora, Colorado, and is a 2006 graduate of the University of Denver Sturm College of Law. He is an active member of the ACLU, AILA, the National Immigration Project, the NLG, and the Colorado Criminal Defense Bar. Hans frequently lectures, publishes, and appears in the press on issues related to immigration law and the criminal justice system.

**Maria G. Monclova**

Founder of Monclova Law P.C. Family Law and Immigration Attorney in Southwest Denver. Received a Juris Doctorate in 2008 from the University of Denver. Assists the community with immigration matters and occasionally holds various events to inform the community about immigration Law. Solo practitioner.

**Julia Iris Montijo**

I am a Colombian native, I move here when my aunt and uncle adopt me at the age of 14. I still keep in contact with my mother and sister that live in Colombia and with the rest of my family there. I came here to get an education and to have a better life. The first 14 years of my life I was raise by Mom (Luzmila Burgos) because my dad disappears when we were little. I attended Abraham Lincoln High School where I was in ESL classes the first year, because I didn't know any English whatsoever. I started taking all of my college prerequisites at CCD and then I transfer to UCD and got my bachelor of science in psychology. I am the first person in my family to have graduated from College; my sister (Kathy Burgos) will be getting her diploma in business Administration on December 2014. I have worked as an Admission counselor at CCD for one year, and I love it.
**Victoria Obregon**

No biography provided.

**Jesse Ramirez**

Jesse Ramirez is a native of Denver, Colorado. In addition to being a first generation Mexican-American, he is also a first generation college graduate. He attended Colorado State University where he earned a degree in Political Science with minors in Chicano Studies and Latin American Studies (2004) and a Master’s Degree in Educational Leadership (2007). He recently started a new non-profit called INSPIRE. He is working to make INSPIRE to be the premier youth development organization in Denver. INSPIRE is working in 5 High Schools and two Middle Schools in the Metro Denver Area.

**Alejandra Rincón, Ph.D.**

Alejandra Rincón is the author of "Undocumented Immigrants and Higher Education: Sí se puede!", the first book that chronicles in a comprehensive way the history of the fight by immigrant students and their supporters to secure access to college across the United States. The book has received many positive reviews. Dr. Rincón is a recognized national speaker on issues related to undocumented immigrants, Latino college access and educational trends. More information on her advocacy work on behalf of undocumented immigrant students can be found at http://www.alejandrarinconphd.com

**Jeanette Rojas**

Originally from Loveland, Colorado, I am a proud alumna of the University of Denver where I graduated with a MA in Curriculum and Instruction and a BA in Anthropology and Spanish with a minor in Leadership Studies. While attending Morgridge College of Education, I worked as the Assistant Program Coordinator for the Pioneer Leadership Program where I supported over 200 undergraduate students in their personal and professional development. I am now in my second year as a College Advisor, now at Denver West Campus, with the Denver Scholarship Foundation. I love working alongside the DREAMers in Denver schools! Throughout my time with DSF in our diverse Denver schools, I have been able to experience financial alongside undocumented students first hand. I have been a part of the Keeping the DREAM Alive committee for two years and fully believe that we can be allies in our schools.

I have a passion for travel and storytelling and have been blessed to able to pursue that in Ecuador, Guatemala, and Canada. In my spare time I find joy in laughing, cooking, and crafting with the people I love most.

**Blanca Trejo**

Blanca is a Denver native and a graduate of West High School. As a Boettcher and Gates Scholar, she triple-majored, earning her BA in Spanish and Political Science as well as a BSBA in International Business from the University of Denver in 2010. Blanca has been an advocate for Colorado ASSET and Immigrant Rights since she was 15. She brings over 11 years of Community and Youth Organizing training experience with Together Colorado, United We DREAM, and the PICO National Network. She is also a proud sister of Pi Lambda Chi Latina Sorority Inc. and a Comadre of the Epsilon Chapter at the University of Denver, the first Latina Sorority on campus.
Arturo Vazquez

Arturo Vazquez received his BA from the University of Denver and a Masters in Urban Education as well from DU. He is the office manager at Monclova Law PC. He oversees the running of the office while at the same time interacts with clients on a day to day basis. Arturo assists clients in matters such as collecting the evidence necessary to present their case and helps them understand their immigration process. Arturo outreaches to the community to organize and plan events to the assist the community in understanding the area of immigration law.

For more information and to access this program and other resources, please visit the website at:

www.du.edu/cme/resources/keep-dream-alive.html