

UCI OCEAN

Fall 2025 Quarterly Newsletter



OCEAN Faculty Director's Welcome

Hey everyone,

Want to give you all a warm welcome to the new 2025-26 academic year!

Our bi-weekly seminar series is starting up again, and this fall quarter's theme will focus on engaging in RPPs with Indigenous communities.

This time of year is when we see many of our research projects with community partners beginning to take shape. It's inspiring to see the incredible work being planned. As your projects get underway, please remember to share your successes and progress with us. Just as importantly, don't hesitate to share your challenges so we can support one another.

We'd love to highlight your insights throughout the academic year, and we'll also be sharing the amazing work of OCEAN community. Your contributions are what make this community so vibrant and successful!

Wishing you all a productive and rewarding quarter.

Best,

Andres Bustamante, Ph.D

Associate Professor

Faculty Director, OCEAN

OCEAN Fall 2025 Seminar Series



We are now collecting [registration](#) for the OCEAN Fall 2025 Seminar. All School of Education

graduate students, faculty, and interested community partners are invited to attend.

The seminar will be led by OCEAN faculty, graduate students, and community partners throughout the 2025-26 academic year.

2025 Fall Quarter Sessions:

- October 8 from 12 - 1 p.m.
- October 23 from 12 - 1 p.m.
- November 6 from 12 - 1 p.m.
- November 20 from 12 - 1 p.m.
- December 4 from 12 - 1 p.m.

[Register here.](#)

OCEAN Faculty Fellows Spotlight



Eupha Jeanne Daramola, Ph.D

The state of California has invested over \$4 billion in community school policies and programs. However, it is unclear what role Latinx communities play in shaping community school policy in school districts. Dr. Eupha Jeanne Daramola is partnering with the Latinx community organization [OCCCCO](#) and the non-profit organization Anaheim Intersections to address this question. Together, they are exploring pathways to examine the ways community organizations are shaping community school policy in Orange County, CA.

Lena Shi, Ph.D

Although a college degree has the potential to boost economic mobility, many low-income college students fall short of their employment goals. Using a randomized controlled trial, Dr. Shi and [Career Launch Academy](#) will evaluate the impacts of embedding career coaching into a college course curriculum on students' academic and employment outcomes. Our research partners include up to three colleges across the U.S. and Career Launch, which is a non-profit that will design the career coaching curriculum.



OCEAN RPP Dissertation Fellow Spotlight

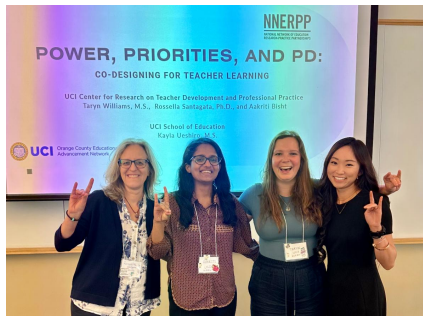
Kelley Riffenburgh

My dissertation examines ways educators can support multilingual newcomer students in U.S. public secondary schools, with a focus on institutional structures and the pedagogical practices used in contexts of varied linguistic heterogeneity. Earlier this month, with the support of the OCEAN RPP Dissertation Fund, I was able to travel to Virginia to visit a newcomer-serving school site that I have worked in partnership with for three years. While there, I was

able to connect with school leadership, observe classrooms and teacher team meetings, and collect a variety of school-based artifacts. I am grateful for the opportunity to continue developing this partnership and for these educators' valuable contributions informing my dissertation work.



2025 NNERPP Annual Forum St. Louis, MO



Professor Rossella Santagata, and doctoral students, Aakriti Bisht, Kayla Ueshiro, and Taryn Williams presented at the 2025 National Network of Education Research-Practice Partnerships **NNERPP** Annual Forum in St. Louis, MO. The team led two collaborative learning sessions, the first session centered on how to equitably engage youth in Research-Practice Partnerships, and the second session focused on professional development while navigating power dynamics, district priorities, and equity goals. NNERPP is a professional learning community that supports and connects research-practice partnerships in education.



"At NNERPP, I was grateful for the opportunity to share about my partnership work while also learning from inspiring colleagues across the nation and world. I especially valued gaining new perspectives on the impact of partnership work in different contexts, as well as building community through engaging discussions and fun team moments." - Kayla



"NNERPP was a conference like no other; the interactive, hands-on sessions allowed me to work and learn alongside researchers, teachers, administrators, and more from all over the country. Everyone was so welcoming and supportive and I was grateful to have such a space to share what I was working on for my first-year poster." - Taryn

2024 - 2025 OCEAN Highlights

Monroe UC Irvine Community School



Launched in August 2024, the Monroe UC Irvine Partnership School is a formal collaboration between the University of California, Irvine's (UCI) School of Education, the Santa Ana Unified School District (SAUSD), and the school's local community. Together, we are transforming Monroe Elementary into a model community school, an innovative, collaborative learning environment focused on improving student outcomes.

This partnership reflects a shared commitment to educational equity and innovation. By embedding university research and expertise directly into the school community, we aim to strengthen teaching, support the community, and improve academic achievement. It's about catalyzing research that is centered on the needs and priorities of the school community, and leveraging resources and relationships to create a learning environment where children, educators, and families are supported every step of the way.



Leveraging the Power of Sports & Community



Led by Professors Gustavo Carlo, Lindsey Richland, Paola Andrea Guerrero Rosada, and Andres Bustamante, we are excited to announce a new research-practice partnership that brings together a passionate group of leaders and innovators from the UC Irvine School of Education, **UANL Tigres Foundation**, **La Academia Santa Ana**, **Ricky Martin Foundation**, the **University of Granada**, and the **U.S. Embassy in Mexico**. This partnership is leveraging the power of sports and community funds of knowledge to promote pro-social behaviors, academic learning, and mental health to improve educational outcomes for youth and families in Southern California and Mexico.



Early Childhood Education



Program Evaluation of the Orange County In-Home Licensed Child Care Program

In this partnership with First 5 Orange County, Professor Jade Jenkins and graduate students evaluated the program implementation efforts, assessed the program's successes and barriers, and summarized the program's changes on participants knowledge and achievement in opening licensed family child care homes.

[Read the report here.](#)

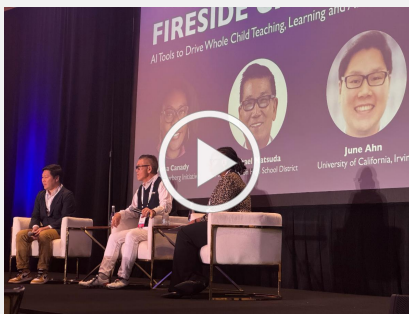
Transforming Santa Ana Parks & Bus Stops into Interactive Learning Spaces



In February 2025, the UC Irvine School of Education, led by Associate Professor and OCEAN Faculty Director Andres Bustamante, in partnership with the City of Santa Ana, Santa Ana Parks & Recreation, and the Santa Ana Early Learning Initiative (SAELI), unveiled three new playful learning installations at Madison Park and Angels Park. These installations are part of an effort to bring learning beyond the classroom by embedding science, math, and literacy concepts into everyday public spaces. Designed to engage children and families in meaningful educational experiences, these interactive spaces transform parks into community learning hubs.

[Check out the UCI Podcast](#)

2025 AI K-12 Deeper Learning Summit



The AI K-12 Deeper Learning Summit is dedicated to equipping educational leaders, administrators, and teachers with in-depth insights and strategies from AI educational innovators and thinkings. The summit is organized by the Anaheim Union High School District, Digital Promise, aiEDU, and the University of California, Irvine School of Education. It spotlights interactive workshops tailored to enhance educators' AI comprehension, showcasing optimal methods for infusing AI into both instruction and assessment practice.

UCI OCEAN

Catalyzing Research-Practice Partnerships

UCI OCEAN is a network of research-practice partnerships between K-12 schools, nonprofit organizations, and the UCI School of Education. We engage in actionable scholarship to positively impact the diverse communities that we partner with. Our mission is to help develop community partnerships that foster: collaboration, mutual respect, community needs and

priorities, and the use of research to improve learning and education. Our core capacity at OCEAN is to conduct research that can inform the decisions and improvement efforts of our partners.

To learn more about OCEAN, our learning community, and how we engage in research-practice partnerships, and how we can support your efforts in cultivating community-centered research practice partnerships, please reach out to our Associate Director, Adam M. Lara, Ph.D at adam.lara@uci.edu and visit our [website](#).

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