

HSI RESEARCH
COLLABORATION
CONFERENCE

2025



CULTIVATING COMUNIDAD:

STRENGTHENING TIES THROUGH RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND FUNDING

Cultivating Comunidad is a 2-day convening for HSIs and emerging HSIs to identify synergies and forge research partnerships and collaborations across our landscape of public and private, 2- and 4-year institutions.

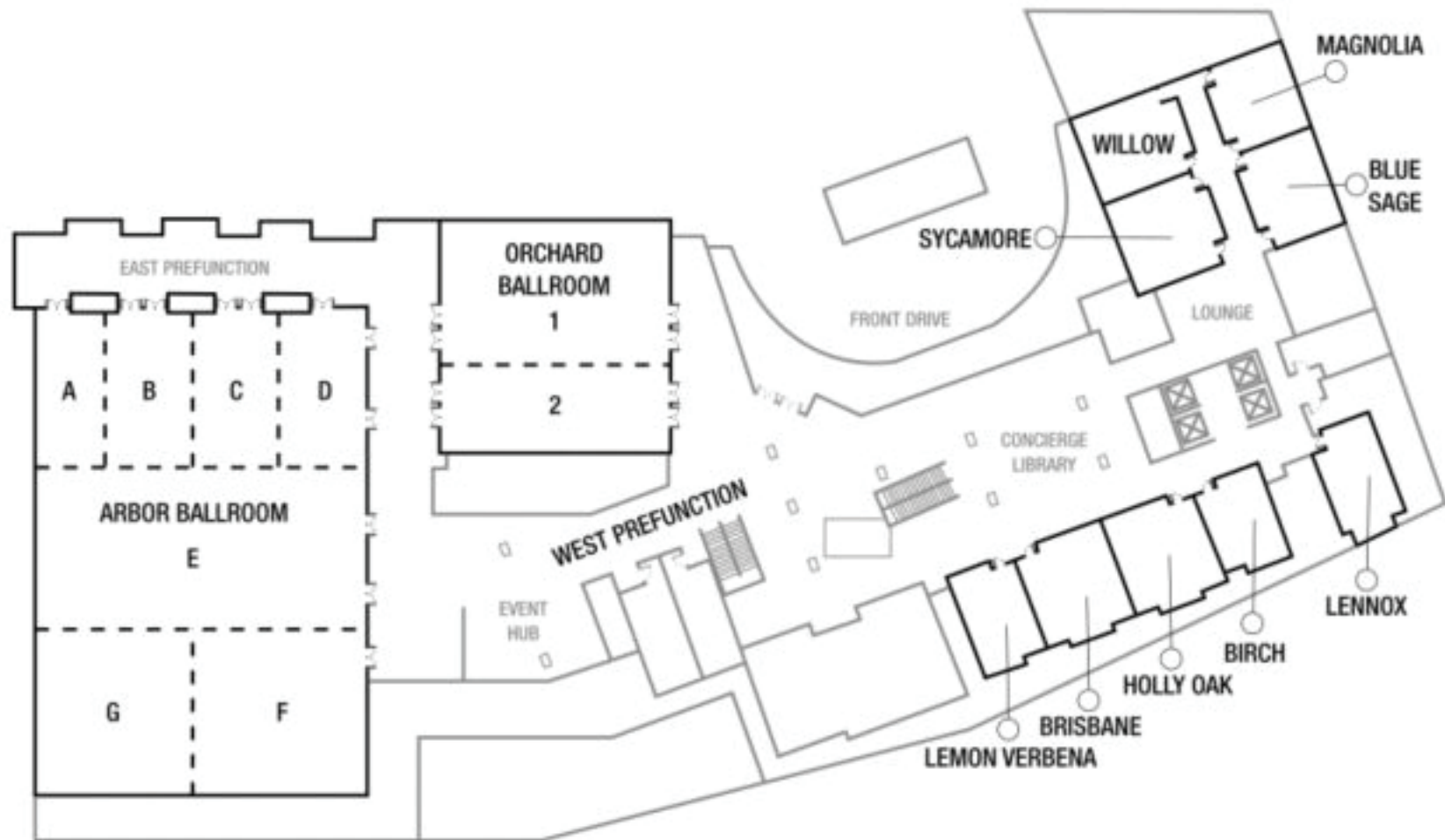
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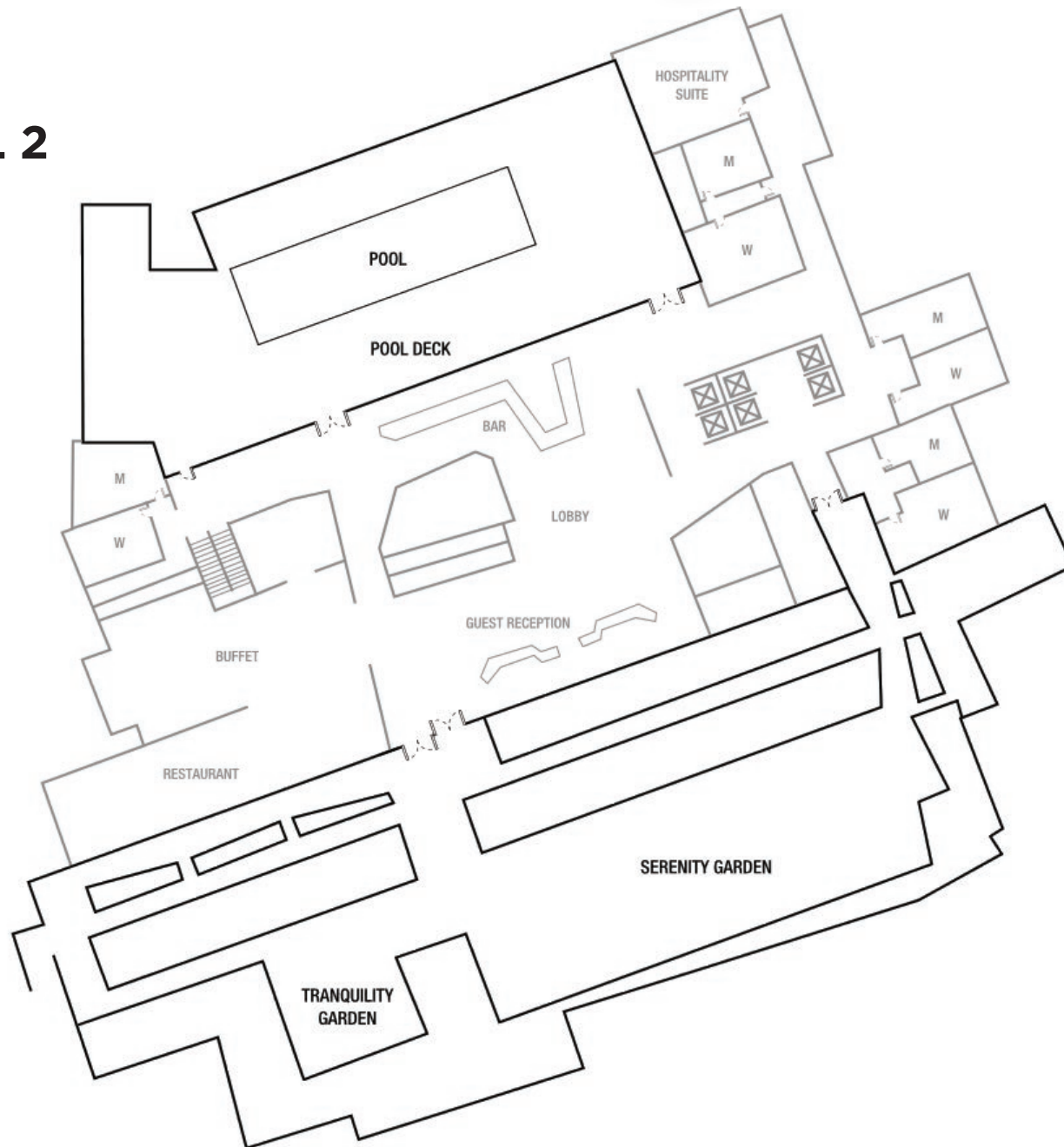
LEVEL 1 — JW MARRIOTT, ANAHEIM

LEVEL 1



LEVEL 2 — JW MARRIOTT, ANAHEIM

LEVEL 2



CULTIVATING COMUNIDAD

STRENGTHENING TIES THROUGH RESEARCH,
INNOVATION AND FUNDING

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

5:00PM - 8:00PM REGISTRATION

Location: Serenity Garden

6:00PM - 8:00PM WELCOME RECEPTION

Location: Serenity Garden

Kick off the HSI Research Collaboration Conference by joining us for an evening of connection and comunidad! Open to all attendees, this reception is the perfect opportunity to meet new colleagues, reconnect with peers, and set the tone for an inspiring conference ahead.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

8:00AM - 9:00AM BREAKFAST

Location: Orchard Ballroom

8:00AM - 6:00PM REGISTRATION

9:00AM - 9:15AM WELCOME ADDRESS



Jeffrey Stewart
Vice Chancellor of Inclusive Innovation
& Community, University of California,
Santa Barbara

9:15AM - 10:30AM PLENARY SESSION: SERVING AND STRIVING: RESEARCH AND RANKINGS AT HSIS

Location: Arbor EFG

This panel explores the tensions HSIs must balance in pursuing their serving mission along with expanding research activity. Panelists will discuss how “servingness” intersects with Carnegie status and strategies for aligning research with equity-centered outcomes for Latinx and first-generation students.

Speakers:



Mushtaq Gunja
Executive Director of the Carnegie
Classification Systems and
Senior Vice President at ACE



Leslie Gonzales
Professor of Higher Education,
University of Arizona



Hrant Hratchian
Professor of Chemistry & Biochemistry
and Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate
Studies, University of California Merced



Amanda Quintero
Senior Advisor to the President for
Inclusive Excellence and Equity
Innovation Officer, California State
University, Northridge

WEDNESDAY

10:30AM - 10:50AM COFFEE AND SNACK BREAK

Location: West Prefunction

10:50AM - 11:50AM FUNDING AGENCY CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSION - PCORI AND DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ARMY RESEARCH LABORATORY

Location: Arbor C

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) is an independent nonprofit organization that funds research to help patients, caregivers, and clinicians make informed healthcare decisions, focusing on comparative clinical effectiveness research. The Department of Defense Army Research Lab supports science and technology innovation through funding for Minority Serving Institutions.

Speakers:



Meghan Warren
Senior Program Officer, Patient-Centered
Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI)



Valien Emery
Outreach & Small Business Program
Manager, Army Research Lab

10:50AM - 11:50AM FUNDING AGENCY CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSION - NSF

Location: Arbor B

The NSF GRANTED program funds research capacity building by supporting projects that improve research administration, infrastructure, and workforce development. The NSF HSI program supports projects that enhance undergraduate STEM education at Hispanic-serving Institutions in all disciplines supported by NSF and improves access to computing and lab resources necessary to enhance undergraduate students' educational experiences.

Speakers:



Sarah O'Brien
Rotational Program Director,
National Science Foundation (NSF)



Michael Ferrera
Program Officer in the Directorate for
STEM Education, National Science
Foundation (NSF)

WEDNESDAY

12:00PM - 12:45PM REGIONAL COLLABORATION NETWORKING BREAKOUT SESSION - **NORCAL**

Location: Brisbane

Join colleagues from your geographic region to discuss collaboration strategies and envision regional projects among your diverse institutions.

Speaker:



Mayra Padilla
Dean of Institutional Effectiveness and
Equity, Contra Costa College

12:00PM - 12:45PM REGIONAL COLLABORATION NETWORKING BREAKOUT SESSION - **CENTRAL VALLEY**

Location: Holly Oak

Join colleagues from your geographic region to discuss collaboration strategies and envision regional projects among your diverse institutions.

Speaker:



Amber M. Gonzalez
Professor, Child and Adolescent
Development, DEGREES Project
Faculty Advisor College of Education,
California State University, Sacramento

12:00PM - 12:45PM REGIONAL COLLABORATION NETWORKING BREAKOUT SESSION - **SAN DIEGO**

Location: Arbor B

Join colleagues from your geographic region to discuss collaboration strategies and envision regional projects among your diverse institutions.

Speaker:



John Crockett
Associate Vice President for Research
Advancement in the Division of
Research and Innovation, San Diego
State University

WEDNESDAY

12:00PM - 12:45PM REGIONAL COLLABORATION NETWORKING BREAKOUT SESSION - LOS ANGELES AREA

Location: Arbor C

Join colleagues from your geographic region to discuss collaboration strategies and envision regional projects among your diverse institutions.

Speakers:



Amanda Quintero
Senior Advisor to the President for
Inclusive Excellence and Equity
Innovation Officer, California State
University, Northridge



Verónica Montoya
Senior Director of Hispanic Serving
Institutions (HSI) National Initiatives at
the Global HSI Equity Innovation Hub,
California State University, Northridge

12:00PM - 12:45PM REGIONAL COLLABORATION NETWORKING BREAKOUT SESSION - CENTRAL COAST

Location: Arbor D

Join colleagues from your geographic region to discuss collaboration strategies and envision regional projects among your diverse institutions.

Speaker:



Barbara Endemaño Walker
Director of Strategic Research Ini-
tiatives in the Office of Research
and Special Assistant for Academic
Initiatives in the Office of the Executive
Vice Chancellor, University of Califor-
nia, Santa Barbara

12:45PM - 1:45PM LUNCH SPONSORED BY: THORN RUN PARTNERS AND ATKISSON TRAINING GROUP

Location: Orchard Ballroom



ATG

1:45PM - 2:45PM PLENARY SESSION: W.T.F. WITH FEDERAL FUNDING

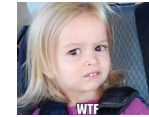
Location: Arbor EFG

This session will explore the evolving landscape of federal policies affecting Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), emphasizing how recent legislative changes, executive orders, and administrative actions are shaping the opportunities and challenges these institutions face. Given the critical role HSIs play in advancing educational access and equity for Latino students, the session will also provide insights into the political climate, regulatory shifts, and strategic policy directions that impact their sustainability, growth, and funding prospects.

Speaker:



Luis Maldonado
Vice President of Government
Relations and Policy Analysis, AASCU



2:45PM - 3:15PM COFFEE AND SNACK BREAK

Location: Event Hub

3:15PM - 4:15PM PLENARY SESSION: CREATING ECOSYSTEMS OF OPPORTUNITY THROUGH HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS

Location: Arbor EFG

How can Hispanic-Serving Institutions sustain their educational missions in current times? It is critical that HSIs forge strategic partnerships with other HSIs to address the needs of historically underserved communities. In this talk, I weave scholarship on organizational change, broadening science participation, and HSIs to address how HSIs can develop comunidad with one another to strengthen and sustain their missions of integrating access and excellence in higher education. Drawing on my long-standing engagement with two of the country's largest HSI networks, the Computing Alliance of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (CAHSI) and the Hispanic-Serving Research University Alliance (HSRU), I illustrate key approaches, values, and strategies to advance effective HSI partnerships. Audience members will be invited to consider how these tools apply to their own institutional, regional, systemic, and sociopolitical contexts. I hope that the ensuing conversation inspires new and expanded multi-institutional HSI collaborations.

Speaker:



Anne-Marie Núñez
Inaugural Executive Director of the
Diana Natalicio Institute for Hispanic
Student Success, Distinguished Centennial
Professor in Educational Leadership
and Foundations, The University of Texas
at El Paso

CULTIVATING COMUNIDAD

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INNOVATION AND FUNDING

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

8:00AM - 9:00AM BREAKFAST

Location: Orchard Ballroom

8:00AM - 12:00PM REGISTRATION

Location: West Prefunction

9:00AM - 9:45AM PLENARY SESSION: STATE AND FEDERAL STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN HSIS AND LATINX STUDENT SUCCESS

Location: Arbor EFG

The most consistent feature of Federal guidance, both for policy and funding, during calendar year 2025 has been inconsistency. However, lack of predictability does not mean that campus responsibility or opportunity for strategic advocacy can be put on hold. In this session, we will explore what specific actions, tactics, and strategies campus leaders can pursue to up-regulate engagement with legislators, partner with like-minded organizations at the state and federal level, uplift the roles of all Minority-Serving Institutions as partners, and manage the ongoing discourse on Latine student success.

Speakers:



Enrique Murillo
Professor of Education, California State University, San Bernardino; Member, President Biden's Advisory Commission on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics



John Crockett
Associate Vice President for Research Advancement in the Division of Research and Innovation, San Diego State University



Cristóbal Rodríguez
Associate Provost for Equity-Centered Initiatives in Academic Affairs, Western Michigan University

9:45AM - 10:45AM FUNDING AGENCY CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSION: SPENCER AND WILLIAM T. GRANT FOUNDATION

Location: Arbor B

The Spencer Foundation is the only national foundation focused exclusively on supporting education research, including high-quality education research training and the impact of education research for improving educational practice. The William T. Grant Foundation invests in research focused on reducing inequality in youth outcomes and improving the use of research evidence in decisions that affect young people in the United States.

Speakers:



Adam Gamoran
President, William T. Grant Foundation



Jessica Marshall
Program Officer, Spencer Foundation

THURSDAY

9:45AM - 10:45AM FUNDING AGENCY CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSION: LUCE FOUNDATION AND ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON

Location: Arbor C

The Luce Foundation funds initiatives in American art, east and southeast Asia, democratic culture and practices, indigenous knowledge, religion and theology, and women in STEM. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funds research on health equity.

Speakers:



Isabel Cuervo
Program Officer in the Research-Evaluation-Learning Department, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



Sean Buffington
Interim President and Vice President for Programs, Henry Luce Foundation

9:45AM - 10:45AM FUNDING AGENCY CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSION: DANA FOUNDATION AND AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

Location: Arbor D

The Dana Foundation funds research on neuroscience that benefits society and explores the connections between neuroscience and society's challenges and opportunities. The American Cancer Society funds the full realm of cancer research, including basic, translational, clinical, and cancer control research.

Speakers:



Khara Ramos
Vice President of Neuroscience & Society, Dana Foundation



Douglas Hurst
Scientific Director of the Biochemistry and Immunology of Cancer program in the Extramural Discovery Sciences Department, American Cancer Society

10:45AM - 11:00AM COFFEE AND SNACK BREAK

Location: West Prefunction

THURSDAY

11:00AM - 12:00PM INDUSTRY RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS CONCURRENT BREAKOUT - EQUITY INNOVATION HUB PRESENTATIONS

Location: Holly Oak

11:00AM - 12:00PM INDUSTRY RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS CONCURRENT BREAKOUT - EQUITY INNOVATION HUB PRESENTATIONS

Location: Brisbane

11:00AM - 12:00PM INDUSTRY RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS CONCURRENT BREAKOUT - EQUITY INNOVATION HUB PRESENTATIONS

Location: Sycamore

11:00AM - 12:00PM DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING A SUCCESSFUL UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY PROGRAM

Location: Arbor B

The authors of the book “Designing and Implementing a Successful Undergraduate Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity Program” will present resources for faculty, administrators, and university leaders interested in developing new, or expanding existing, undergraduate research programs. The session will be a practical, hands-on session addressing the many “how to” questions associated with running a successful undergraduate research enterprise with a focus on increasing access to research and creating inclusive research environments. Participants will work through how undergraduate research is connected to servingness on their campus and develop strategies to enhance the research enterprise while centering students.

Speakers:



Holly Unruh
Executive Director of the
Arts Research Institute at the
University of California,
Santa Cruz (UCSC)



Heather Heager
Research Director for the Science,
Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics
(STEM) Learning Center and an Associate
Professor in Educational Policy Studies
and Practice at the University of Arizona

11:00AM - 12:00PM DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATIVE S-STEM GRANT

Location: Arbor C

This session will discuss planning, writing, and implementing a collaborative Track 3 \$5 million NSF S-STEM (“Mentored Pathways”) between Southwestern College (SWC; Award 1929756) and San Diego State University (SDSU; Award 1929758), two HSIs in the San Diego region. This project grew from the longstanding connection between chemistry faculty at the two institutions and addressed observed concerns with students successfully transferring between SWC and SDSU and earning Chemistry & Biochemistry degrees. Our grant leveraged institutional agreements and faculty strengths at both institutions by providing a guaranteed transfer admission along with mentorship and research experiences to support students in building connections within their institution and finding their place in the STEM community across campuses. Since the grant was awarded in 2019 we have supported over 200 students across both institutions majoring in STEM fields and transferring to SDSU. This breakout session will discuss key aspects of the program that were strengths during the review process and for Mentored Pathways scholars as well as aspects of the program that were found to be difficult to implement or ineffective for students. The SDSU lead PI, Regis Komperda, and a former Mentored Pathways scholar, Errys Frondarina, will provide insights and suggestions for others looking to build similar programs and open a dialog with audience members about how to develop and implement a successful collaborative S-STEM.

Speakers:



Regis Komperda
Associate Professor at San Diego
State University



Errys Frondarina
Chemistry Instructor at
Southwestern College

11:00AM - 12:00PM AI IN RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT: FROM TOOL TO TEAMMATE

Location: Arbor D

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into research development is no longer a question of “if”, but “how?”. According to Microsoft’s 2025 Work Trend Index, we are witnessing the emergence of what the report calls the Frontier Firm, a new organizational model built around “intelligence on tap” and human agent teams, where AI becomes a core collaborator shaping how work gets done (Microsoft, 2025). In this evolving landscape, AI is no longer a peripheral tool but a core collaborator.

In research, AI-powered tools leveraging machine learning (ML), natural language processing (NLP), and robotics now support tasks ranging from literature reviews and data analysis to experimental design and manuscript writing.

Within the realm of research, AI-powered technologies such as machine learning (ML), natural language processing (NLP), and robotics are increasingly embedded in core activities, from literature reviews and data analysis to experimental design and manuscript writing. As highlighted by Mitra Madanchian and Hamed Taherdoost (2025), AI is not just accelerating these workflows, it is redefining them. Their work illustrates how AI has moved from being a helpful enhancement to an essential infrastructure supporting discovery, insight generation, and scholarly collaboration.

This session will explore how research development professionals can effectively harness AI across various stages of the research lifecycle. It will offer practical strategies for integrating AI tools into day-to-day workflows, equipping participants with insights and applications that reflect the new reality of AI-driven research development. Participants will gain insight into emerging pilot projects and best practices from institutions actively using AI in research development, as well as the ethical and practical dilemmas surrounding its use in both research

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

THURSDAY

and research administration. Real-world use cases will be discussed, ranging from coaching early-career PIs to supporting large-scale, center-level proposals. The session will also examine methods for applying AI in the proposal writing process, particularly for automating standard content and improving drafts through iterative refinement. Additionally, it will cover administrative automation using AI for tasks such as scheduling, email drafting, document organization, summarization, and more.

Attendees will leave with actionable strategies for making AI a value-adding partner in their research development efforts, combining technological efficiency with human insight to meet the evolving demands of the research landscape.

References:

Madanchian, M., & Taherdoost, H. (2025). The impact of artificial intelligence on research efficiency. Results in Engineering, 26, Article 104743. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rineng.2025.104743>

Microsoft. (2025, April 23). 2025: The year the Frontier Firm is born [Work Trend Index Annual Report]. Microsoft WorkLab. Retrieved from Microsoft WorkLab website <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/2025-the-year-the-frontier-firm-is-born>

Speaker:



Avesta Baraki
Research Advancement Data Analyst,
SDSU (Division of Research and
Innovation)

11:00AM - 12:00PM VISIONING, ORGANIZING, LEADING, AND ADVANCING THE RESEARCH ENTERPRISE AT HSIS

Location: Arbor A

This session will showcase the VOLARÉ Institute, a yearlong initiative led by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) and funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). Designed to empower two- and four-year Higher Education Institutions including Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), the Institute supports the advancement of institutional research enterprises through a comprehensive framework that includes capacity-building workshops, sustained expert mentorship, and inclusive, HSI-focused resources.

With a strategic emphasis on broadening participation in STEM and cultivating a diverse, equity-driven research workforce, VOLARÉ helps institutions navigate persistent challenges such as limited infrastructure, funding disparities, and barriers to faculty development. The initiative also equips institutions to foster interdisciplinary collaborations, pursue competitive grant opportunities, and elevate their visibility within the national research landscape.

Participants will gain a deeper understanding of how the NSF-funded VOLARÉ Institute supports HSIs in building sustainable research ecosystems, advancing student and faculty success, and positioning campuses as innovation leaders contributing meaningfully to the nation's research priorities.

Speakers:



Oralia de los Reyes
Assistant Vice President for Programs
and Services, Hispanic Association of
Colleges and Universities (HACU)



Briana Jackson
Program Manager for the VOLARÉ
Institute at the Hispanic Association
of Colleges and Universities (HACU)

THURSDAY

12:00PM - 1:30PM PLENARY LUNCH SESSION: EXCELLENCE IN ACTION: SCALING HSI RESEARCH THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Location: Arbor EFG

This culminating session features faculty engaged in collaborative research projects that include partnerships with UC, CSU, and CCC institutions to reflect on the promise and impact of intersegmental research collaborations. Through a moderated panel and facilitated roundtables, participants will explore how these collaborations advance research outcomes, foster inclusive innovation, and strengthen the HSI ecosystem. Together, we'll identify barriers, envision system-level supports, and generate actionable next steps to expand and sustain collaborative research across institutions.

Speakers:



Deborah Santiago
Co-founder and Chief Executive
Officer, Excelencia in Education



Amanda Quintero
Senior Advisor to the President for
Inclusive Excellence and Equity
Innovation Officer, California State
University, Northridge



Enrique Velasco
Director, Metas & DHSI Ganas Grant,
San José City College



Dolores Inés Casilla
Professor and Chair, Chicana and
Chicano Studies,
San José City College



Amber M. Gonzalez
Professor, Child and Adolescent
Development DEGREES Project
Faculty Advisor College of Education,
California State University, Sacramento

1:50PM - 3:50PM ONE ON ONE MEETING OPPORTUNITIES WITH PROJECT DIRECTORS

Location: Various

Sign-ups will be available via the conference app. More information will be provided during the Plenary Lunch Session.

1:30PM - 4:00PM UC RD NETWORK SESSION

Location: Willow

Thank You to Our Sponsors

We are deeply grateful to our generous sponsors whose support makes this conference possible.
Their investment empowers connection and innovation amongst our comunidad.



COLEGAS
California Community Colleges Organización de Latina/o/x
Empowerment, Guidance, and Advocacy for Success



ATG

Planning Committee Appreciation

A heartfelt thank you to the dedicated universities and individuals who served on our Planning Committee. Your vision, collaboration, and commitment brought this conference to life.



John Crockett
Associate Vice President for Research
Advancement in the Division of
Research and Innovation, San Diego
State University

SDSU | San Diego State
University



UC SANTA BARBARA

Barbara Endemaño Walker
Director of Strategic Research Initia-
tives in the Office of Research and
Special Assistant for Academic Initia-
tives in the Office of the Executive Vice
Chancellor, University of California,
Santa Barbara



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Verónica Montoya
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Institutions (HSI) National Initiatives at
the Global HSI Equity Innovation Hub,
California State University, Northridge



Mayra Padilla
Dean of Institutional Effectiveness and
Equity, Contra Costa College



Funding Agency and Organization Recognition

We want to recognize the federal and foundation funding organizations that were able to attend the conference and share their information with our attendees.

