



**NASPA**<sup>®</sup>

Student Affairs Administrators  
in Higher Education

**2022-2023**

## **Emerging Faculty Leader Academy Cohort**

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Orkideh Mohajeri  
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Valerie Thompson  
Assistant Professor for Educational  
Leadership/Educational Psychology  
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More information about this program can be found here:  
[https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/Emerging\\_Leaders\\_Overview.pdf](https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/Emerging_Leaders_Overview.pdf)



Melissa Abeyta  
Assistant Professor  
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley  
@melissaabeyta

Dr. Melissa Abeyta is a mother, a partner, daughter and first-generation scholar. Her research revolves around using an anti-deficit lens that explores the experiences of formerly incarcerated students in higher education. Prior to transitioning into the professoriate, she worked as a practitioner-scholar in an equity assessment lab that conducted qualitative research and assessment for regional and national projects.

Dr. Abeyta was awarded the Ron Jacobs Outstanding Research Award for her dissertation, *A Phenomenological Study of Formerly Incarcerated Latino Men in California Community Colleges*. Her research has been recognized as a model of transformation and change. Dr. Abeyta is committed to serving traditionally underrepresented students in higher education through research and policy. She also serves as the inaugural co-chair for the NASPA Formerly Incarcerated Students & System Impacted Families Knowledge Community.



Aerial Ashlee  
Assistant Professor  
St. Cloud State University  
@DrAerialAshlee

Aerial A. Ashlee (she/her/hers) is a proud womxn of color, mamascholar, and first-gen student. She currently serves as Assistant Professor and Graduate Director of College Counseling and Student Development at St. Cloud State University, where she is also the inaugural Belonging Mindset Faculty Fellow in the Center of Excellence for Teaching and Learning. Prior to pursuing a faculty career, Dr. Ashlee focused her work as a student affairs educator on advocating for Students of Color, advancing social justice, and facilitating intergroup dialogues.

Dr. Ashlee's research interests include critical autoethnography, healing and liberatory methodology, poststructural possibilities for student affairs praxis, and the racialized experiences of underrepresented Asian Americans in higher education, specifically transracial adoptees and Hmong Americans. She has published in a variety of peer-reviewed journals, co-authored and co-edited two books, and written several open-access publications.

Dr. Ashlee currently serves on the NASPA Faculty Council and as the Minnesota Coordinator on the NASPA Region IV-E Board. She holds a Ph.D. in Student Affairs and Higher Education from Miami University in Ohio, M.Ed. in Counseling & College Student Personnel from the University of Maryland, College Park, and B.A. in Strategic Communication from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.



Genia Bettencourt  
Assistant Professor  
University of Memphis  
@DrGMBettencourt

Genia M. Bettencourt (she/her/hers) is an Assistant Professor of Higher and Adult Education at the University of Memphis and a research associate with the Pullias Center for Higher Education at the University of Southern California and the Center for Student Success Research at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Her research focuses on issues of access, equity, and student success for marginalized student populations in higher education, with a particular focus on issues of social class and classism. Dr. Bettencourt's research has been published in a variety of venues including the *Journal of College Student Development*, *The Review of Higher Education*, and *The Journal of Higher Education*.

A scholar-practitioner, Dr. Bettencourt also held a variety of roles in student affairs across residence life, pre-college programs, and student leadership prior to transitioning to academia. She previously held leadership roles in the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). She holds Ph.D. in Higher Education and a Graduate Certificate in Social Justice Education from the University of Massachusetts Amherst; an M.S. in College Student Services Administration from Oregon State University, and; B.A. degrees in English, History, and Political Science from the University of California, Davis.



Jorge Burmicky  
Assistant Professor  
Howard University  
@JorgeBurmicky

Jorge Burmicky, Ph.D. (he/him/él) is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education Leadership and Policy Studies at Howard University in Washington D.C. One of his research lines examines the leadership pipeline in higher education, with an emphasis on racially minoritized leaders at Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), community colleges, and regional universities. Another line of research explores policies and practices that support the educational outcomes of men of color, specifically the impact of men of color programs and initiatives on student success.

Dr. Burmicky received his Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy from the University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin). Prior to joining the faculty at HU, he was as an Assistant Director of Research at UT Austin's Project MALES, a mentoring and research initiative committed to advancing equitable educational outcomes for men of color. Dr. Burmicky worked as a higher education and student affairs practitioner for 12 years in the areas of admissions, residence life and housing, student activities, and diversity and community engagement.

Dr. Burmicky is a faculty affiliate with NC State's Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research and UT Austin's Project MALES. He is an active member of several professional associations, including the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE), and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA).



Lazaro Camacho  
Faculty of Practice  
University of Rhode Island  
@LazCamacho

Dr. Lazaro Camacho, Jr. (he, him, él) is a Faculty of Practice in the College Student Personnel program, College of Education and Professional Studies, at the University of Rhode Island. He believes that positive student success is driven by an intersectional and systemic approach to student-centered teaching, research, and service. His research critically explores the educational outcomes of Latino men and historically marginalized students. As a part of this work, Dr. Camacho's scholarship centers men and masculinities, men of color, intersectional socialization, mentorship, and community college based educational pathways.

Dr. Camacho earned his Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from Florida Atlantic University, and both his M.S. in College Student Personnel and B.S. in Kinesiology from the University of Rhode Island. Before transitioning to the role of faculty, he spent 13 years working in student affairs, in areas such as housing and residence life, wellness, student development, and academic advising.

Dr. Camacho is a faculty affiliate with the University of Texas at Austin's Project MALES. He serves as a member of the Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice (JSARP) New Professionals/Graduate Student (NPGS) Editorial Board, and he is the incoming NASPA Region I Faculty Liaison. In recognition of his work, he was awarded the ACPA Coalition on Men & Masculinities Outstanding Graduate/New Professional Award.



Orkideh Mohajeri  
Assistant Professor  
West Chester University of Pennsylvania  
@OrkidehM

Dr. Orkideh Mohajeri (she/her) is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education Policy & Student Affairs in the Department of Educational Foundations & Policy Studies at West Chester University. Her scholarship leverages critical and poststructural frameworks to push up against and trouble the operations of whiteness and white supremacy in postsecondary settings. More specifically, her work explores the discursive construction of contested racial subjectivities for multiracial and mixed ancestry postsecondary students. Prior to pursuing a faculty career, Dr. Mohajeri served as an academic advisor and program coordinator at the University of Minnesota. She has also taught and worked in South America and the Middle East. Her work has been published in the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *Teachers College Record*, and the *Journal of Access, Retention, and Inclusion in Higher Education*. Dr. Mohajeri earned her Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership, Policy & Development from the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities, her M.Ed. in Human Resource Development and her M.A. in International Development Education from the same institution, and her B.A. in Sociology/Anthropology from Carleton College.





Valerie Thompson  
Assistant Professor for Educational  
Leadership/Educational Psychology  
Wichita State University  
@VThompsonks

Dr. Valerie J. Thompson (she/her/hers) is an Assistant Professor within the Intervention Services & Leadership in Education (ISLE) Department at Wichita State University. Specifically, she coordinates and teaches within the Higher Education Leadership Graduate Certificate program and the Higher Education/Student Affairs (HESA) program. Additionally, Dr. Thompson has fifteen years of student affairs experience in the following areas: Multicultural Affairs, Student Life, Health Promotions, Learning Services, Housing, Judicial, and Career Services. Furthermore, she is one of the co-creators/co-hosts of BLK Womyn Podcast (Higher Education-Student Affairs Podcast), which centers on the lived experiences of BLK Womyn within Higher Education. Dr. Thompson's research interests center Black women student affairs professionals and burnout, compassion fatigue, intersectionality, (race and gendered) stress, and (race and gendered) fatigue.

Dr. Thompson has been an active member of several professional organizations, including the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA). She currently serves as the NASPA Region IV-West Representative for Womxn in Student Affairs.



Erica Wiborg  
Visiting Assistant Professor  
College of William & Mary  
@erwiborg

Dr. Erica R. Wiborg (she/her/hers) is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Higher Education at the William & Mary School of Education. She is a critical, qualitative scholar committed to deconstructing systemic racism, the sociohistorical influences of race and racism, and hegemonic whiteness in postsecondary leadership learning environments. Her research interests center on four main areas – 1) college access and inequity in leadership learning and teaching; 2) critical race theory and whiteness in leadership; 3) critical leadership pedagogy; 4) college student leadership development, including identity, capacity, efficacy, emotional intelligence, and spirituality. Erica's teaching interests draw from her years of experience as a student affairs administrator and include a range of higher education and qualitative methods courses; more specifically topics such as diversity and social justice, student affairs administration, college student development theory, leadership, assessment, qualitative data analysis, and critical discourse analysis. Prior to her faculty appointment, Erica completed a PhD in Higher Education at Florida State University.