

DENISA GÁNDARA

Southern Methodist University
Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and Human Development
The Department of Education Policy & Leadership
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EDUCATION

PhD, 2016 Higher Education University of Georgia

Constructing “winners and losers:” An analysis of higher education performance funding policy designs in Colorado and Texas

Committee: Erik C. Ness (Chair), James C. Hearn, Sheila Slaughter, Manuel González Canché

BA, 2011 Philosophy, Psychology Minor The University of Texas at Austin

BA, 2011 Spanish, Linguistics Minor The University of Texas at Austin

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

2016-present **Assistant Professor of Education Policy & Leadership**
Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and Human Development
Southern Methodist University

SELECTED AWARDS AND HONORS

2015 Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship (\$25,000)

2015 American Educational Research Association (AERA) Minority Dissertation Fellowship-Travel Award

2014 Scholars Strategy Network, Harvard University; Invited Member

2013 Zell and Shirley Miller Graduate Fellow, Institute of Higher Education, University of Georgia; Competitive Award

2011-2013 Graduate School Recruitment Opportunity Fellow, University of Georgia; Competitive Award; \$40,000

RESEARCH AND POLICY EXPERIENCE

- 2013-2014** **Consultant** “Campus Responses to Tennessee’s Complete College Tennessee Act and Outcomes-Based Funding Formula” project supported by the Ford Foundation and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC)
- Responsibilities: collaboratively design ethnographic case study interview and observation protocols; conduct over 40 interviews with officials from two campuses and the University of Tennessee System; conduct observations; analyze qualitative data for two campuses; collaboratively write papers, including final report to THEC and the Ford Foundation
- 2011-2015** **Project Manager** “The Distinct Role of Intermediary Organizations in Fostering Research Utilization for State College Completion Policy” project funded by the W.T. Grant Foundation
- Responsibilities: collaboratively develop grant proposal with Erik Ness, Principal Investigator (PI), and James C. Hearn, Co-PI; design interview and observation protocols for five states; iteratively produce a coding scheme for qualitative data analysis; manage a six-member team in the data collection, data analysis, and presentation of findings from Phase 1 of the project
- 2011-2015** **Graduate Student Research Assistant**
- “Financial Returns on Graduate Education,” with Robert K. Toutkoushian.
Responsibilities: construct dataset using data on financing of graduate education and labor market returns; conduct quantitative analyses; write papers
- “Ideological think tanks in higher education,” with Erik C. Ness.
Responsibilities: build database for content analysis using archived data from 99 ideological think tanks’ websites; conduct qualitative analyses; write papers
- 2010-2011** **Policy Intern, Texas Senate Higher Education Committee**
- Responsibilities: write policy memos; research and prepare materials, including bill analyses and briefs, for higher education bills for use by Senate Higher Education Committee Chair, Judith Zaffirini, Ph.D.

PUBLICATIONS

Gándara, D. (2016). College Students, State Policies, and Undocumented Status. In Lomotey, K., Jackson, P.B., Adem, M., Ruf, P.X., Copeland, V.C., Huerta, A., Iglesias-Prieto, N.V., & Brown, D.L. (Eds.), *People of Color in the United States: Contemporary Issues in Education, Work, Communities, Health, and Immigration*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

Jones, T., Jones, S., Owens, L., Assalone, A. Elliott, K., & **Gándara, D.** (In Press). *Outcomes Based Funding and Race in Higher Education*. Basingstoke, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ness, E.C., Milan, M. & **Gándara, D.** (2015). Campus Responses to Outcomes-Based Funding in Tennessee: Robust, Aligned, and Contested. Nashville: Tennessee Higher Education Commission. <https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/thec/attachments/FordFoundationPaper.pdf>

Ness, E.C. & **Gándara, D.** (2014). Ideological Think Tanks in the States: An Inventory of their Prevalence, Networks, and Higher Education Policy Activity. *Educational Policy*, 28(2), 258-280.

MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW AND IN PREPARATION FOR SUBMISSION

Gándara, D., Ness, E.C., & Rippner, J. (Accepted). Exploring the “How” in Policy Diffusion: A National Intermediary Organization’s Role in Facilitating the Spread of Performance Funding Policies in the States.

Gándara, D. & Hearn, J.C. (Under review). College Completion, the Texas Way: An Examination of the Development of College Completion Policy in a Distinctive Political Culture.

Gándara, D. & Toutkoushian, R. (Under review) Updated Estimates of the Average Financial Return on Master’s Degree Programs in the United States.

Gándara, D. (Under review). Does Evidence Matter? An Analysis of Evidence Use in Performance-Funding Policy Designs in Two States.

Li, A., **Gándara, D.**, & Assalone, A. (Under review). Do Performance-Funding Policies Disadvantage Two-Year Minority-Serving Institutions?

Gándara, D. & Ness, E.C. (In preparation for journal submission). Ideological Think Tank Activity and the Politics of College Affordability in the States.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Gándara, D. The Devil is in the Details: Social Construction and Performance Funding Policy Design in Colorado.

Gándara, D. Performance-Funding Policy Agenda-Setting across 46 States: A Text Mining Analysis of Policy Consideration.

Ness, E.C., **Gándara, D.**, & Deupree, M.M. Inputs Matter: An Exploration of an Outcomes-Based Funding Policy’s Impacts on Two Community Colleges.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Invited Presentation

Gándara, D., Rutherford, A. (November 2015). Performance-based Accountability for Higher Education: How’s It Measuring Up? Presented at the Graduate Student Policy Seminar at Association for the Study of Higher Education Conference. Denver, CO.

Peer-reviewed Presentations

Gándara, D. (March 2017). Performance Funding Policy Designs in Colorado and Texas. Paper to be presented at the Association for Education Finance and Policy. Washington, D.C.

Gándara, D. (November 2016). Policy Actors' Use of Evidence to Inform Performance Funding Policy Designs in Two States. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education. Columbus, OH.

Gándara, D. (November 2016). “Under the Guise of Performance Funding:” An Analysis of Higher Education Funding Model Design in Colorado. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education. Columbus, OH.

Assalone, A., **Gándara, D.**, Elliott, K., Jones, S., Jones, T., Li, A., Russell Owens, L. (November 2016). Can Equity Be Bought? Performance Based Funding and Racial Equity. Panel at the Association for the Study of Higher Education. Columbus, OH.

Ness, E.C., Hearn, J.C., **Gándara, D.**, Tandberg, D., Longanecker, D., Sponsler, B. (November 2015). Scholars, Intermediaries, and State College Completion Policy: An Interactive Discussion of Research-Policy Connections. Panel at the Association for the Study of Higher Education Conference. Denver, CO.

Gándara, D. & Hillman, N. (April 2015). Recycling Policy Ideas: The Case of Performance Funding in Higher Education. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting. Chicago, IL.

Gándara, D., Ness, E.C., & Rippner, J. (April 2015). Exploring the “How” in Policy Diffusion: A National Intermediary Organization’s Role in Facilitating the Spread of College Completion Policies in the States. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting. Chicago, IL.

Ness, E.C., **Gándara, D.**, & Deupree, M.M. (April 2015). Inputs Matter: An Exploration of Outcomes Funding Impacts on Two Community Colleges. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting. Chicago, IL.

Gándara, D. & Hearn, J.C. (November 2014). College Completion, the Texas Way: An Examination of the Development of College Completion Policy in a Distinctive Political Culture. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education Conference. Washington, D.C.

Dougherty K., **Gándara D.**, Hillman N., Kinne A., Li, A., Miller T., Ness, E.C., Reindl T., & Tandberg, D. (*panelists listed in alphabetical order*). The State of Performance Funding in the States: Origin, Design, Implementation, and Effects (November 2014). Panel at the Association for the Study of Higher Education Public Policy Preconference. Washington, D.C.

Gándara, D. & Toutkoushian, R. (April 2014). What’s it worth?: A Nuanced Evaluation of the Pecuniary Value of Graduate Degrees. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting. Philadelphia, PA.

Gándara, D. & Ness, E.C. (April 2014). Ideological Think Tanks and the Politics of College Affordability in the States. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting. Philadelphia, PA.

González-Canché, M., **Gándara, D.**, Brajkovic, L., Harding, J., & Turk, J. (April 2014). State Retention of the “Best and Brightest”? An Examination of the Variation in Mobility Tendencies for College Students by Academic Profiles. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting. Philadelphia, PA.

Gándara, D. & Byars, J.C. (November 2013). Who's Next? Estimating the Predictors of Adoption of Undocumented Student Policies. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education Conference. St. Louis, MO.

Gándara, D. (November 2012). Non-pecuniary Capital Characteristics and Perceptions of Family Ability to Pay for College. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education Conference. Las Vegas, NV.

Ness, E.C. & **Gándara, D.** (November 2012). Ideological Think Tanks in the States: An Inventory of their Prevalence, Networks, and Higher Education Policy Activity. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education Conference. Las Vegas, NV.

Other Conference Participation

- 2016** University of Houston Law Center’s Institute for Higher Education Law and Governance Houston Higher Education Finance Roundtable (presentation and fellowship)
- 2015** William T. Grant Foundation’s Mentoring Meeting
- 2015** Institutional Design Frontiers Summit, Arizona State University (presentation)
- 2013** AERA Emerging Scholars Workshop

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Courses Taught, Southern Methodist University

Higher Education Finance (MEd Level)	EPL 6396	Spring 2016
Financial Strategy and Management (EdD Level)	EPL 7383	Spring 2016 Fall 2016

SERVICE

Leadership

- 2016-2019** ASHE CPPHE Member-At-Large (Elected)
- 2016-2017** Texas Higher Education Symposium, Pre-Symposium Committee Member (Co-Chair, 2017)

2013-2015 AERA Division J Graduate Student Representative

2013-2014 ASHE Community Service Ad-Hoc Committee Member

Other Professional Service

2016 Member, Faculty Learning Community: Creating Inclusive Classrooms

2016 Reviewer, *Higher Education Policy*

2016 Reviewer, *The Journal of Higher Education*

2016 Reviewer, *Community College Review*

2015-2016 Proposal reviewer, AERA Annual Conference

2014-2015 Proposal reviewer, ASHE Annual Conference

2013 Application reviewer, AERA Graduate Student Travel Grant

Community Outreach

2016 Invited Policy Expert, Texas Education Policy Town Hall

2016 Vice President of Education, The Colony Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

RESEARCH TRAINING

Workshops

2012 Association for Institutional Research (AIR)/ ASHE IPEDS Workshop Participant

2012 Social Network Analysis Workshop, University of Georgia

Relevant Research Methods Courses

WT Grant / Dedoose / UCLA Mixed Methods Meeting: Measure development, coding and analysis, organizing and working with mixed methods research teams, publishing mixed methods work, launching large-scale mixed methods studies, reliability assessment of qualitative data

Qualitative Research: Collection and analysis of data from documents, observations, and interviews, including elite interviews

Social and Statistical Network Analysis (*audit*): Measures of centrality, visual representation of networks, key actor analysis, ego networks, text network analysis, two-mode networks, QAP, and dynamic network analysis

Survival Analysis in Biostatistics (*audit*). Analyzing time-to-event data (i.e., univariate parametric and nonparametric procedures, regression models, diagnostics, group comparisons)

Social Network Theories and Methods Workshop, University of Georgia (by Kenneth Frank): Selection, influence, causality, graphical representations, and centrality

Statistics for Econometrics: Probability, sampling, expectation, distribution functions, parametric and conditional distributions, independence, functions of random variables, and maximum likelihood

Linear Models: Ordinary least squares, violations of the underlying assumptions of multiple regression, instrumental variables estimation, simultaneous equations, propensity-score matching, and panel data techniques

Advanced Topics in Statistical Modeling: Logit/probit, selection models, ordered logit/probit, nested logit, poisson regression, multinomial logit, panel data estimation, and time-series econometrics

Multilevel Modeling: Estimation, reliability, model-building, intra-class correlation, fixed and random effects

LANGUAGES

Spanish, Native