

# **DENISA GÁNDARA**

Southern Methodist University  
Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and Human Development  
The Department of Education Policy & Leadership  
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## **RESEARCH SPECIALIZATIONS**

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**Higher education policy and politics:** ideology, intermediaries, policy design, policy analysis

**Higher education finance:** funding equity, funding models

## **EDUCATION**

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<b>PhD, 2016</b>	Higher Education	University of Georgia
<b>BA, 2011</b>	Philosophy, Psychology Minor Spanish, Linguistics Minor	The University of Texas at Austin

## **CURRENT ACADEMIC APPOINTMENT**

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<b>2016-</b>	Assistant Professor of Education Policy & Leadership Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education & Human Development Southern Methodist University
<b>2020</b>	Visiting Scholar Ghent University

## **SELECT AWARDS AND HONORS**

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### **RESEARCH GRANTS**

<b>2017-2019</b>	Research Grant, American Educational Research Association (\$35,000) <i>Title: The “promise” of free tuition and impacts on college enrollment: Differences across race and socioeconomic status</i> <i>Role: Principal Investigator, with Co-Principal Investigator Amy Li</i>
<b>2016-2018</b>	Research Grant, Latino Center for Leadership Development / Tower Center (\$10,000) <i>Title: Using State Administrative Data to Study College Access for English Learners</i> <i>Role: Principal Investigator</i>
<b>2016-2017</b>	University Research Council Grant, Southern Methodist University (\$3,240) <i>Title: Target Populations in Higher Education Act Reauthorization Policy Process</i> <i>Role: Principal Investigator</i>

### **FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS**

- 2019**      *Semi-Finalist*, Spencer Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship
- 2019**      *Finalist*, William T. Grant Scholars Program (awaiting final decision)
- 2019**      *Nominee*, SMU Mustang Teaching Award
- 2015**      Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship (\$25,000)
- 2015**      American Educational Research Association Minority Dissertation Fellowship-Travel Award
- 2013**      Zell and Shirley Miller Graduate Fellow, Institute of Higher Education, University of Georgia
- 2011-2013**      Graduate School Recruitment Opportunity Fellow, University of Georgia
- 2011**      College of Liberal Arts Dean's Distinguished Graduate, The University of Texas at Austin
- 2009-2011**      Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program Scholar

## **BOOK**

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Jones, T., Jones, S., Owens, L., Assalone, A. Elliott, K., & **Gándara, D.** (2017). *Outcomes- Based Funding and Race in Higher Education*. Basingstoke, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

## **PEER - REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS**

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### **SCHOLARLY JOURNAL ARTICLES**

- Gándara, D.** (2019, Online First). How the Sausage is Made: An Examination of a State Funding Model Design Process. *The Journal of Higher Education*.
- Gándara, D.**, & Ness, E.C. (2019). Ideological Think Tank Activity and the Politics of College Affordability in the States. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 90(5), 717-743.
- Gándara, D.** (2019). Does Evidence Matter? An Analysis of Evidence Use in Performance-Funding Policy Designs in Two States. *The Review of Higher Education*, 42(3), 991-1022.
- Gándara, D.** & Hearn, J.C. (2019). College Completion, the Texas Way: An Examination of the Development of College Completion Policy in a Distinctive Political Culture. *Teachers College Record*, 121(2), n2.
- Gándara, D.** & Rutherford, A. (2018). Mitigating Unintended Impacts? The Effects of Premiums for Underserved Populations in Performance-Funding Policies for Higher Education. *Research in Higher Education*, 59(6), 681-703.

Li, A., **Gándara, D.**, & Assalone, A. (2018). Do Performance-Funding Policies Disadvantage Two-Year Minority-Serving Institutions? *Community College Review*, 46(3), 288-315.

**Gándara, D.**, Rippner, J., & Ness (2017). Exploring the “How” in Policy Diffusion: A National Intermediary Organization’s Role in Facilitating the Spread of Performance Funding Policies in the States. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 88(5), 701-725.

**Gándara, D.** & Toutkoushian, R. (2017). Updated Estimates of the Average Financial Return on Master’s Degree Programs in the United States. *Journal of Education Finance*, 43(1), 21-44.

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.

## BOOK CHAPTER

Li, A.Y., & **Gándara, D.** (2019). The “Promise” of Free Tuition at Public Two-Year Colleges: Impacts on Student Enrollment. In L. Perna & E. Smith (Eds.) *Improving Research-Based Knowledge of College Promise Programs*. American Educational Research Association.

## NON-REFEREED RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

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### BOOK CHAPTERS

**Gándara, D.** & Siu, K. (In Press). The States and Higher Education Finance. In G.R. Serna & J.M. Cohen (Eds.) *Administration, Finance, and Budgeting in Higher Education and Student Affairs: Theory, Research, & Practice*.

**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.

### COMMISSIONED POLICY REPORT

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>

## MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW AND IN REVISION

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**Gándara, D.** & Li, A. (Revise & Resubmit). Making Good on Promises: Free College Programs and Enrollments by Race and Gender at Public, Two-Year Colleges.

Rutherford, A. & **Gándara, D.** (Revise & Resubmit). Completion at the Expense of Access? The Effects of Performance-Funding Policies on Access to Public Four-Year Universities.

Hu, X., Fernandez, F., **Gándara, D.** (Revise & Resubmit). The New Rich: Analyzing the Impact of Matching Donations to Emerging Research Universities in Texas.

Ness, E., Rubin, P., **Gándara, D.**, & Hearn, J. (Revise & Resubmit). Political Volatility in State Commitment to College Completion Efforts. *Volatility in State Spending for Higher Education*. American Educational Research Association. [Peer-reviewed Book Chapter]

**Gándara, D.** & Jones, S. (Under Review) Who Deserves Benefits? The Portrayal of Groups Targeted in a Higher Education Act Policy Design Process.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

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### **KEYNOTES**

Gándara, D. (November 2018). What to Expect from College. Keynote at Understanding Undergrad Program. Southern Methodist University, College Access Programs. Dallas, TX.

Gándara, D. (July 2018). Opportunity through Education. Keynote at South by Southwest Conference: Chartering The Head Start Journey: Measuring Our Success. Corpus Christi, TX.

### **INVITED PRESENTATIONS**

Ballerini, V., Gándara, D., Kramer, J., Swanson, E., Miller-Adams, M. (November 2019). Researchers' Roundtable. PromiseNET. Berkeley, CA.

Gándara, D. (May 2019). Using Data to Improve Institutional Effectiveness. California Association of Chief Budget Officers. Lake Tahoe, CA.

Gándara, D. (August 2018). The Status of Latinos: Educational Conditions & Projections. Panel at the Latino Center for Leadership Development Leadership Academy: The Need for Leadership seminar. Dallas, TX.

Gándara, D. (August 2017). Higher Education in a Changing Political Climate. Panel at the Texas Higher Education Symposium. Austin, TX.

Gándara, D. (June 2017). Federal Panel on Latino Education. Panel at the State of Latino Education - A Policy Conference on Statewide and National Opportunities and Challenges. Dallas, TX.

Gándara, D. (January 2017). Performance Funding Model Designs. Presentation to Vice Presidents for Business Services at Dallas County Community College District. Dallas, TX.

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.

### **INVITED DISCUSSANT / CHAIR IN SCHOLARLY PAPER SESSION**

The Clash of Honest Ethics and Corporate Greed in Higher Education Lobbying. (To be discussant November 2019). Association for the Study of Higher Education. Portland, OR.

The Cost of Doing Business: Budget, Financial Aid, and Student Outcomes at the Institutional Level. (To be chair November 2019). Association for the Study of Higher Education. Portland, OR.

Promise / Free-College Programs. (July 2018). Council for Public Policy in Higher Education Summer Research and Policy Forum: Emerging Issues in College Affordability. Washington, D.C.

Contemporary Equity-Driven Policy Work. (April 2018). American Educational Research Association. New York, NY.

A Look How the Sausage Is Made: Understanding the Policy Making Process. (November 2017). Association for the Study of Higher Education. Houston, TX.

State Policies Informing the National Higher Education Discourse. (November 2017). Association for the Study of Higher Education. Houston, TX.

### **SELECT REFEREED SCHOLARLY PRESENTATIONS**

Gándara, D. (November 2019). Why Have Some States Resisted Performance-Based Funding Policy Diffusion? Paper to be presented at Association for the Study of Higher Education. Portland, OR.

Ballerini, V., Callahan, K., Deaton, R., Gándara, D., Leigh, E., Li, A., Moreland, A., Pingel, S., Wright-Kim, J. (*panelists listed in alphabetical order*). (November 2019). Different Promises: Emerging Evidence on the Origin, Variability, and Effects of Free-college Programs. Paper to be presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education. Portland, OR.

Gándara, D. & Li, A. (April 2019). Promise for Whom? Free-College Programs and Enrollments by Race and Gender at Public, Two-Year Colleges. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association. Toronto.

Gándara, D. & Cox, T. (November 2018). Social Construction of Groups Targeted in the Higher Education Act Reauthorization Process. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education. Tampa, FL.

Swanson, E., Harris, D., Gándara, D., Ruiz, R., & Smith, E. (November 2018). Free College Tuition Programs: What Do We Know And What Do We Still Need to Know? Panel presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education. Tampa, FL.

Gándara, D. & Barker, D. (October 2018). College Access for English Learners. Presentation at Texas Association of Bilingual Educators. Dallas, TX.

Gándara, D. & Li, A. (March 2018). Making Good on Promises: Design Features and Enrollment Effects of Two-Year Free College Programs. Paper presented at the Association for Education Finance and Policy. Portland, OR.

Rutherford, A. & Gándara, D. (November 2017). Completion at the Expense of Access? Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education. Houston, TX.

Gándara, D. & Ness, E. (November 2017). Framing College Affordability across the Ideological Divide. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education. Houston, TX.

Gándara, D. & Li, A. (October 2017). The “Promise” of Free Tuition at Two-Year Colleges: Impacts on Total and Low-Income Student Enrollment. Paper presented at the College Promise Research Conference. Philadelphia, PA.

Bonner, F.A., Gándara, D., Horn, C., Hurtado, S., Miller, R., Rodriguez, C., Reddick, R., Valenzuela, A. (*panelists listed in alphabetical order*). (April 2017). Texan, Born and Raised: Higher Education Tejano Scholars and Equity-Minded Research Agendas. Panel at the American Educational Research Association. San Antonio, TX.

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.

## TEACHING

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<b>Spring 2016</b>	EPL 6396: Higher Education Finance (M.Ed.) EPL 7383: Finance in Higher Education (Ed.D.) EPL 6373: Special Topics (M.Ed.)
<b>Fall 2016</b>	EPL 7383: Finance in Higher Education (Ed.D.)
<b>Spring 2017</b>	EPL 6396: Higher Education Finance (M.Ed.)
<b>Summer 2017</b>	EPL 7354: PK16 Comparative International Policy (Ed.D.)
<b>Fall 2017</b>	EPL 6376: Public Policy and Higher Education (M.Ed.) EPL 7382: Contemporary Issues in Higher Education (Ed.D.)
<b>Spring 2018</b>	EPL 7354 / 6373: PK16 Comparative International Policy (Ph.D., Ed.D. M.Ed.) EPL 6396: Higher Education Finance (M.Ed.)
<b>Fall 2018</b>	EPL 6376: Public Policy and Higher Education (M.Ed.) EPL 7383: Finance in Higher Education (Ed.D.)
<b>Spring 2019</b>	EPL 7382: Contemporary Issues in Higher Education (Ed.D.) EPL 6396: Higher Education Finance (M.Ed.)
<b>Fall 2019</b>	EPL 6376: Public Policy and Higher Education (M.Ed.) EPL 7383: Finance in Higher Education (Ed.D.)

## DISSERTATION ADVISING

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### Committee Chair

1. Susy Perez (Ed.D.)	In Progress
2. Nicole Sonaïke (Ed.D.)	Advanced to Candidacy
3. Christa Rohan (Ed.D.)	Advanced to Candidacy
4. Rachael Capua (Ed.D.)	2019
5. Jennifer Gray (Ed.D.)	2019

### Committee Member

1. Kate Montgomery (Ed.D.)	Advanced to Candidacy
2. Paul Polanco (Ph.D.)	Advanced to Candidacy
3. Molly Ellis (Ph.D.)	2019
4. Scott Hensley (Ed.D.)	2018
5. Carol Kent (Ed.D.)	2018

## PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

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American Educational Research Association  
 Association for Education Finance and Policy  
 Association for the Study of Higher Education

Texas Association for Bilingual Educators

## **NATIONAL SERVICE**

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### **EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBER**

*The Journal of Higher Education*

### **RESEARCH GRANT REVIEWER**

William T. Grant Foundation

### **JOURNAL REVIEWER**

*The Journal of Higher Education*

*The Review of Higher Education*

*Research in Higher Education*

*Educational Researcher*

*Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*

*American Educational Research Journal*

*Teachers College Record*

*Higher Education Policy*

*Higher Education*

*Community College Review*

*Educational Policy Analysis Archives*

### **CONFERENCE PROPOSAL REVIEWER**

American Educational Research Association

Association for the Study of Higher Education

Council for the Study of Community Colleges

### **OTHER REVIEWER**

State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) State Authorization Research

### **WORKING / ADVISORY GROUP MEMBER (Invited)**

Lumina Foundation for Education Working Group for Student Borrowers of Color (2019-2020)

Ithaca S+R / Joyce Foundation Performance-Based Funding Advisory Group (2019)

The Education Trust Working Group on Higher Education Accountability and Equity (2018-2019)

### **MEMBER-AT-LARGE (Elected)**

Council for Public Policy in Higher Education, Association for the Study of Higher Education (2016-2019)



## CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBER

Summer Forum (Washington, D.C.), Council for Public Policy in Higher Education (2018)

Texas Higher Education Symposium Program Committee (2016-2017)

## SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY SERVICE

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Diversity Committee, Simmons School of Education and Human Development (2017-2019)

Ronald. E. McNair Scholars Advisory Board (Invited; 2018-2019)

## DEPARTMENT SERVICE

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M.Ed. Comprehensive Exam Committee (2018-2019)

Ed.D. Admissions Committee (2017-2019)

M.Ed. Admissions Committee (2017-2019)

International Course Committee (2016-2017)

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

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Dallas County Promise Alignment Council Member (Invited; 2018-2019)

JOLT Texas Board Member (Invited; 2019-2022)

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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- 2013-2014**     **Educational Specialist, Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC)**  
Commissioned with support from the Ford Foundation to conduct ethnographic case study of four campuses' responses to outcomes-based funding in Tennessee. Collected and analyzed data, prepared report, and presented to THEC.
- 2012-2013**     **GED Instructor, Athens Latino Center for Education Services (ALCES)**  
Designed curriculum, lesson plans, and lessons for GED class. Taught classes to prepare students for five GED subject exams.
- 2011**            **Policy Intern, Texas Senate Higher Education Committee**  
Researched and prepared policy memos, bill analyses, and briefs for higher education bills for Senate Higher Education Committee Chair, Judith Zaffirini, Ph.D.
- 2010**            **Congressional Intern, Office of U.S. Representative Luis V. Gutierrez**  
Drafted policy memos, attended policy hearings and briefings, and drafted official constituent correspondence.
- 2008**            **Algebra Instructor, Upward Bound, University of Texas at Brownsville**

Designed curriculum, lesson plans, and lessons for Algebra 1 course. Taught lecture and supplemental tutoring session to 50 high school students.