Lillianna Franco Carrera, PhD

Proposed Role: Co- Principle Investigator

EXPERTISE

- Developing, leading, and implementing qualitative research
- Equitable college access and pathway choice
- Implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field of education
- Facilitating equity-based & cultural competence workshops and sessions

EDUCATION

- PhD, Higher Education, Loyola University Chicago, 2021
- MEd, Higher Education, Loyola University Chicago, 2016
- BA, Communication Studies, Northwestern University, 2011

EXPERIENCE

12 years of experience supporting students in their transitions from high school to post-secondary pathways through equitable educational support.
8 years of experience of qualitative research experience as it relates to designing and conducting research studies.

LANGUAGES

- Spanish–Native

Present Position

Technical Assistance Consultant, American Institutes for Research (AIR) (2022–Present)
Supports educators, in high school and postsecondary education, in their efforts to improve systems, processes, and practices as it pertains to college and career decisions, implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion, and in multicultural approaches to education. Designs and implements systemic change processes to improve equitable student success. Develops, conducts, and translates qualitative research to build knowledge on effective strategies.

Selected Professional Experience

Qualitative Research Lead, Credit Mobility Investment Research, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Pathways Team, (2023-Present)

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation granted teams to explore opportunities for improving credit mobility for transfer students. This research study is to evaluate the investment of transfer students in their credit mobility. **Through a new qualitative methodology, which includes a visual representation of their transfer journey called journey mapping, the study findings hope to determine the extent to which transfer students invest their time and how their transition effects their credits transferring.** I developed the interview protocols, consent forms, outreach protocol, coding analysis, analyzed and developed the final report. In addition to developing and implementing this project with fidelity, I also led and organized a team of 5 individuals to support the implementation of interviews, analysis, and reporting.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Lead, Long Beach Network for School Improvement, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2022–Present)
Networks for School Improvement (NSIs), are groups of middle or high schools funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and supported by organizations like the American Institutes for Research, who are **working together to identify and solve common problems using approaches that best fit their needs, learning what works as they go, and refining their approaches**. Our network, at Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), consists of 10 middle schools working together to reach a common aim of improving outcomes for students in

LBUSD. As the DEI consultant I support the AIR team and coaches in their journey in reaching Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC) so that our work is centered in equity and asset based thinking.

Facilitator, Data Informed Leadership for Equity (DILE), Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest (2022–Present)
Through the research arm of the U.S. Department of Education, the Regional Education Laboratory, the DILE project is in its pilot study in the Midwest state of Iowa. Partnership between REL Midwest and Iowa districts and schools to **support educators in making data-informed decisions focused on equity** by codeveloping an approach that aims **to reduce disparities between student groups in sense of belonging, disciplinary actions, and absenteeism.** By using an adaptive data analysis forecasting and reporting tool to facilitate monitoring of sense of belonging and engagement (attendance, discipline) over time, the goal is to be proactive in developing actionable solutions in policies and practices. As a facilitator I support teachers and administrative school staff in understanding reports and developing actionable steps to improve sense of belonging in equitable ways.

Research Coordinator, Pathway Partnership Reviews, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), (2022–2023)
The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has contracted with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct Pathway Partnership Reviews (PPRs) of designated Early College (EC) and Innovation Pathways (IP) programs. These programs aim to ensure that students who historically had limited or no access to promising postsecondary opportunities—often students of color or students experiencing poverty—have greater **access to programs that promise to prepare them for high-quality careers or that make the prospect of attending college a possibility**. This review aims to support program quality and improvement and serves as a check-in after the third or fourth year of designation. The primary goal of the PPR is to collect qualitative data to supplement annual reports and other outcome measures to provide actionable, formative feedback to EC and IP programs. As a the site lead I coordinated the collection of qualitative research efforts including focus groups and interviews. In addition, I collaborated with conducting virtual interviews following protocols.

Research Lead, Maryland College and Career Readiness Standard, Maryland State Department of Education, (2022–2023)
In 2020, the state of Maryland developed the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, legislation that included a central focus on ensuring all Maryland students were prepared and ready to be successful in postsecondary education and/or training. The Blueprint identified a preliminary measure (CCR Standard) of readiness and the Maryland State Department of Education is funding AIR to conduct a one-year mixed-methods study of the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to meet postsecondary readiness expectations in Maryland. **The study findings will be used to determine the extent to which the CCR Standard predicts readiness and aligns with readiness expectations.** The quantitative component of the study uses data from the Maryland Longitudinal Data System to explore the relationship between the CCR Standard and actual readiness; alternative potential measures and actual readiness; and the extent to which the current measure disproportionately impact minoritized students leading to inequitable access to postsecondary readiness. The qualitative component of the study includes the development of conceptual frameworks of readiness, an alignment study of current college and career content standards to those conceptual frameworks, a landscape analysis of the features of top-performing

education systems, and a synthesis of potential bias in postsecondary readiness assessments. As the focus group lead, I developed process, protocols, and debriefs to coordinate and implement qualitative data collection. In addition, I supported in the analysis and reporting of the qualitative findings.

Employment History

2021-2022 Post-doctoral Scholar, Texas State University
2020-2021 Graduate Enrollment Management Counselor, University of Houston-Clear Lake
2018-2019 Undergraduate Academic Advisor, Concordia University Chicago
2017-2020 Graduate Research Assistant, Loyola University Chicago
2016-2017 Enrollment Specialist, Morton College
2014-2016 Center for Experiential Learning, Loyola University Chicago
2012-2013 Graduate Support Advisor, UNO Charter School Network

Awards and Honors

Outstanding Service, Texas State University, 2022
Research Funding, Loyola University Graduate School, 2020
Gates Millennium Scholar, 2007-2021

Professional Affiliations

AAHHE- American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (2021-PRESENT)
ACPA- American College Personnel Association (2019-PRESENT)
ASHE- Association for the Study of Higher Education (2018- PRESENT)
AERA- American Education Research Association (2016- PRESENT)

Selected Publications

Ashford-Hanserd, S. & Franco Carrera, L., (2023). Influence of Community Cultural Wealth on Undergraduate Hispanic and Black Women's Persistence in the STEM+C Workforce Pipeline [Unpublished manuscript]. *Journal of Career and Technical Education Research.*

Hutchings, Q. R., **Franco Carrera, L.,** Noriega, C. (2023). "An empty promise": Experiences of student affairs professionals of color. *College Student Affairs Journal, 21*(2), 83–89.

Torres-Olave, B., Brown, A. M., **Franco Carrera, L.,** & Ballinas, C. (2020). Not waving but striving: research collaboration in the context of stratification, segmentation, and the quest for prestige. *The Journal of Higher Education, 91*(2), 275-299.

Engberg, M. E., **Carrera, L. F.,** & Mika, L. P. (2018). Utilizing Domestic Off-Campus Experiences to Influence Social Justice Awareness and Career Development. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 22*(1), 63-86.

Selected Presentations

Franco Carrera, L. (2023). "Stop Giving Up on Us": Experiences of First-Generation Latinx Students in Their College Choice Process. Paper presented at round table at American Education Research Association (AERA) annual conference in Chicago, IL.

Ashford-Hanserd, S., & **Franco Carrera, L.,** Moreno, T., Mouton, A. (2023). Influences of Community Cultural Wealth on Black and Hispanic Women's Persistence in STEM+C Workforce Pipeline. Paper presented at American Education Research Association (AERA) annual conference in Chicago, IL.

Ashford-Hanserd, S., & **Franco Carrera, L.** (2022). Influence of Community Cultural Wealth on Undergraduate Women of Color's Persistence in the STEM+C Workforce Pipeline. Scholarly research paper under review at the Association for Career and Technical Education Research (ACTER).

Ashford-Hanserd, S., & **Franco Carrera, L.** (2022). Influences of Community Cultural Wealth on Black and Hispanic Women's Persistence in Undergraduate Computing Education. Poster presented at the Research in Equity and Sustained Participation in Engineering, Computing, and Technology (RESPECT) conference in Philadelphia, PA.

Franco Carrera, L., & Hutchings, Q. (2020). An Empty Promise: Experiences of Student Affairs Professionals of Color Through Community Cultural Wealth. Scholarly research presented at American College Personnel Association annual conference in Nashville, TN.

Engberg, M. E., **Franco, L.,** & Mika, L.P. (2016). Utilizing Domestic Off-Campus Experience to Influence Social Justice Awareness and Career Development. Paper presented at round table at American Education Research Association annual conference in Washington, DC.

Garcia-Hills, R. & **Franco, L.** (2016). Academic Early Warning System: Creating A Culture of Care. Paper presented at the Illinois Academic Advising Association annual conference in Normal, IL.