
VICTORIA BALLERINI, PhD

Equity-minded and action-oriented postsecondary education professional with 17 years of experience in developing, implementing, and evaluating access policies, strategies for improving equity, workforce development initiatives, and policies at the intersection of education and immigration.

EDUCATION

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HIGHER AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, 2018

New York University, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development

- Dissertation Title: *America's Promise and Argentina's Unrestricted Access: A Comparative Analysis of Equity Implications in Tuition-Free and Open-Access Models in Higher Education*

MASTER IN DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT OF SOCIAL POLICY, 2013

Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales. Buenos Aires, Argentina

LICENTIATE DEGREE IN SOCIOLOGY, 2005

(Six-year university degree program, validated as BA and MA in the United States by World Education Services)

Universidad de Buenos Aires, School of Social Sciences. Buenos Aires, Argentina

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

EDUCATION COMMISSION OF THE STATES

Associate Director, Strong Start to Finish

- Currently working with Strong Start to Finish's team members, funders, researchers, education practitioners, policymakers, and postsecondary education leaders to advance proven developmental education reforms.

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY & HIGHER EDUCATION

Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary and Commissioner for Postsecondary and Higher Education, 2021-Present

Policy & Strategy

- Collaborated on the development of the Master Plan for Higher Education (2022-2032).
- Convened partners including content experts, postsecondary leaders and practitioners, students, and policymakers in working sessions to inform the development of the Master Plan for Higher Education.
- Supervise the work of advisors in different content areas including adult learners, educator preparation programs, and CTE.
- Advise the Deputy Secretary on issues related to postsecondary and workforce development policies.

Grantmaking

- Leading the implementation of [three grant competitions](#) totaling 5 million dollars to increase the number and diversity of teachers and school leaders.

Design & Implementation of Cross-Agency efforts

- Providing thought partnership to the design and implementation of [Parent Pathways](#), an initiative of the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and the Hope Center to bring visibility to the realities of parenting students in postsecondary education and provide policy solutions. Funded by Ascend at the Aspen Institute.
- Collaborating in the design and implementation of the [Hunger-Free Campus Initiative](#), an effort of the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Office of the First Lady to build a coalition of colleges and universities focused on addressing hunger and other basic needs for their students, and offer grants to colleges and universities to address food insecurity.

Partnering with the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education to include postsecondary institutions in Finding your Way in PA, an app to help students and families find resources to address housing and food insecurity, and mental health needs.

Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

- As a Co-chair of the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (EIB) internal Coalition, I work with colleagues to integrate and EIB lens to the agency's work internally and externally.
- Represent Pennsylvania in a cross-state Equity collaborative or community of practice with staff in other postsecondary state agencies in Massachusetts, Missouri, and Kentucky.

Organizational Strategy

- As a fellow in the [Coherence Lab Fellowship 2.0](#), I worked with a team of colleagues to integrate fragmented approaches to education reform, and prototype solutions to address communication challenges at the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and organization of 520 employees.

RESEARCH FOR ACTION (RFA)

Research Associate, 2018-2021

Research & Evaluation

- Supervised research and evaluation teams of three to four researchers.
- Co-directed the evaluation of Dallas County Promise, a free-tuition program in Dallas, TX.
- Co-directed an evaluation of state policies to narrow racial and ethnic gaps in postsecondary attainment, funded by the Lumina Foundation.
- Directed research on state policies that recognize learning that occurs outside of the classroom (e.g. learning taking place on the job, unions, CBOs, correctional facilities, the military, etc.), funded by the Lumina Foundation.
- Led the development of the state policy section of the [Immigration & Higher Ed Portal](#), a digital platform that centralizes data, research and policies concerning undocumented, DACAmented, refugee, and other immigrant-origin students.
- Led the evaluation of the scholarship and mentoring components of Say Yes to Education-Cleveland, a comprehensive strategy to improve postsecondary attainment that includes family supports in K-12.
- Led the implementation study of statewide Promise programs in Delaware and Nevada as part of a multi-state multi-year study of Promise programs, which also included Tennessee and Oregon; conducted jointly with University of Pennsylvania's Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
- Led discussions with qualitative researchers on research methods in conducting studies across the organization.

Business Development, Grants & Relationship-building

- Secured invited proposals and funding (\$600,000) for policy research via relationship-building with policymakers and funders.
- Fostered relationships with state officials responsible for postsecondary policy, as well as postsecondary institutional leaders to coordinate research in those states.
- Secured funding and built the immigration and higher education portfolio at Research for Action by expanding the organization's network of partners.
- Co-PI in a study submitted for federal funding to examine the effects of Colorado's Displaced Workers Grant on postsecondary attainment and employment outcomes.

Dissemination

- Published various public and internal policy briefs and evaluation reports, a fact sheet, and an op-ed.
- Presented policy research to broad audiences including researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and advocates, at conferences

and via twitter talks.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, STEINHARDT OFFICE OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Program Manager, 2015– 2018

- Managed graduate Study Abroad Programs focused on Education and Higher Education in Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and South Africa.

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY/UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE SAN MARTIN, SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT MA IN DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT & POLICY

Academic Coordinator, 2004 – 2013

Program Development & Implementation

- Developed framework for collaborative program management that complied with bi-national regulations and accreditation standards.
- Coordinated financial management for both universities.
- Managed the annual course offering by coordinating with both UNSAM and Georgetown faculty.
- Provided TA to coordinators of new joint programs between Georgetown University and universities in other countries about how to co-manage international programs.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Designed and conducted self-study reports for internal and external evaluations.

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE SAN MARTIN, SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

Director of Graduate Programs, 2005-2010

- Managed common course offering for all graduate programs in the School of Government.
- Coordinated presentation of program reports for both internal evaluations and external evaluations and accreditation by the National Accreditation Agency.
- Trained coordinators of new programs to submit their degrees for approval by the Ministry of Education.
- Served as liaison between the School of Government and the National Accreditation Agency.
- Supervised team of 6 program assistants.

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT & THE ENVIRONMENT, ARGENTINE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Policy Analyst-Coordination of International Relations, Office of the Minister, 1999-2001

- Contributed to formulating the Ministry's international relations agenda.
- Assisted the Coordinator of International Relations and the Minister in an effort to coordinate social policy at the regional level in the MERCOSUR area; conducted a series of meetings with European Union social policy experts.
- Prepared the follow-up reports for international summits and regional conferences on social policy (World Summit for Social Development, First Meeting of Social Policy Authorities of Latin America and Europe, Meetings of MERCOSUR's Social Policy Ministers, First Meeting of Women Ministers-OAS, Poverty Alleviation Conference, ECLAC, etc).
- Managed the Ministry's cooperation initiatives with Embassies and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Organized workshops and seminars for Ministry's officials with foreign scholars and policymakers.

INDEPENDENT HIGHER EDUCATION CONSULTING

[Education Strategy Group](#)

- Led research and writing of 14 case studies for the Accelerating Recovery through Credentials (ARC) project, including initiatives to support adult learners via innovations in data collection and management, program delivery, partnerships with employers, support for basic needs insecurity, and financial aid.

[Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration](#)

- Led the development of a theory of change and logic model for the organization's largest initiative: the Higher Education and Immigration Portal
- Co-wrote a policy memo for congressional offices on the inclusion of immigrant students in federal free-tuition community college proposals

- Conducted a needs assessment with users of the Portal

WestEd

- Co-PI on a research proposal to examine financially sustainable practices in the launch and implementation of Promise programs in California to inform a potential federal-state partnership to provide tuition-free community college nationally.

POLICY BRIEFS, REPORTS, FACT SHEET, OP-ED, TOOLKIT, THEORY OF CHANGE

Theory of Change for the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration's Higher Ed Portal initiative. November, 2021. <https://www.higheredimmigrationportal.org/about/theory-of-change/>

Co-author of 'Including Undocumented Students in Tuition-Free Community College Proposals'. Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education & Immigration. October, 2021. Web <https://www.presidentsalliance.org/including-undocumented-students-in-tuition-free-community-college-proposals/>

The Accelerating Recovery through Credentials Adult-Ready Playbook. Education Strategy Group (ESG). Case Studies by Victoria Ballerini and ESG. September, 2021. Web <https://edstrategy.org/resource/adult-ready-playbook/>

All Learning Counts Toolkit. An initiative of the Lumina Foundation and Research for Action to advance statewide initiatives to award credit for prior learning. June, 2021. Web <https://alcpolicytoolkit.com/about/>

Ballerini, V. Postsecondary Education and Undocumented Students. Fact sheet. Research for Action. October, 2020. Web <https://www.researchforaction.org/publications/promise-programs-an-avenue-to-expand-college-affordability-access-and-success-for-undocumented-students/>

Meehan, K., Ballerini, V., and Hagood, S. Driving Awareness, Inclusion, and Integration for Racial Equity in Postsecondary Education. Research for Action. March, 2020. Web <https://www.researchforaction.org/research-resources/postsecondary-workforce/driving-awareness-inclusion-and-integration-for-racial-equity-in-postsecondary-education/>

Ballerini, V., Feldblum, M., and Kent D.C. Op-Ed. College Promise Programs and Undocumented Students. Inside Higher Ed. March, 3, 2020. <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2020/03/03/college-promise-programs-can-make-college-more-affordable-undocumented-students>

Ballerini, V., Hagood, S., Meehan, K., and Callahan, M.K. The Case of Nevada Promise: Promise Replication in a Different State Context. Research for Action. December, 2019. Web <https://www.researchforaction.org/research-resources/postsecondary-workforce/the-case-of-nevada-promise-promise-replication-in-a-different-state-context/>

Burkander, K., Ballerini, V., Kent, D.C., and Callahan, M.K. The Case of Delaware's SEED Scholarship: A Well-Established but Lesser-Known Promise Program. December, 2019. Research for Action. Web <https://www.researchforaction.org/research-resources/postsecondary-workforce/the-case-of-delawares-seed-scholarship-a-lesser-known-long-running-program-designed-to-increase-affordability/>

Burkander, K., Callahan, M.H., Ballerini, V., and Hagood, S. Statewide Promise Programs: Balancing Affordability, Access, and Student Success. December, 2019. Research for Action. Web <https://www.researchforaction.org/research-resources/postsecondary-workforce/statewide-college-promise-programs-balancing-affordability-access-and-student-success/>

ACADEMIC DISTINCTIONS AND SCHOLARLY RESEARCH

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, STEINHARDT SCHOOL OF CULTURE, EDUCATION, AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Challenge Grant Recipient-Dissertation Research, April-December 2017.

- Conducted research on the equity implications of tuition-free and open-access programs in Tennessee, USA, and Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Steinhardt Institute for Higher Education Policy-Research Assistant, June-August 2014

- College Affordability in the United States. A Historical Analysis, with Dr. Martha Kanter, U.S. Under Secretary of Education (2009-2013)

Recipient of Steinhardt Doctoral Fellowship, 2013-2017

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, PENN CENTER FOR MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS

Margin Buster Award, Research Assistant, September 2015 - February 2016

- Developed an international postsecondary access and equity framework in collaboration with Dr. Stella Flores.
- Conducted research and wrote policy memos on existing federal and state policies to promote equity in access to postsecondary education in Brazil and South Africa.

LATIN AMERICAN FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

National Science and Research Council Grant-Research Assistant, September 2014-March 2015.

- Conducted research for the project 'Bilateral Cooperation in Science and Technology between Argentina and Brazil: Cooperation or Competition?' With Dr. Mercedes Botto, National Science Council, Argentina.

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Ballerini, V. and Feldblum, M. (2021). Immigration Status and Postsecondary Opportunity: Barriers to Affordability, Access, and Success for Undocumented Students, and Policy Solutions. *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 80 (1), 161-186
<https://doi.org/10.1111/ajes.12380>

Botto, M. and Ballerini, V. (2020). La Internacionalización de la Educación Superior en América del Sur: un Estudio Comparado entre Argentina y Brasil. In Birle, P., Michelini, G., Santorsola, M. V. and Luján Acosta, F. (Eds.). *Políticas públicas para la internacionalización de la educación superior en América Latina* (pp. 95-110). Madrid: Ibero-Americana. ISBN 978-84-9192-138-7.

Wolniak, G. and Ballerini, V. (2019) Peer Effects, Higher Education. In Teixeira P., Shin J. (eds) *Encyclopedia of International Higher Education Systems and Institutions*. Springer: Dordrecht.

Ballerini, V. (2017). Global Higher Education Trends and National Policies: Access, Privatization, and Internationalization in Argentina, *Policy Reviews in Higher Education* 1(1), 42-68.

SELECTED CONFERENCE & INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Panel presentation on the Role of Validation Theory in the

Panel presentation on State Policies to Support Immigrant-Origin Students in Higher Education. The State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) Association Policy Conference, November, 2021. Washington, D.C.

Panel presentation on College Promise Research and Practice. College Promise and Financial Sustainability Symposium. The College Promise Campaign, October 30, 2019. Washington D.C.

Ballerini, V. (2019). Statewide Promise Programs Supporting Undocumented Students: Lessons for Access, Affordability, and Success, PromiseNet, Berkeley, CA.

Ballerini, V. (2019). Different Equity Approaches to Tuition-Free and Open-Access Higher Education, Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), Toronto, Canada.

Ballerini, V. (2018). America's Promise and Argentina's Unrestricted Access: Equity Implications of Tuition-Free and Open-Access Models in Higher Education, Annual Conference of the European Consortium of Higher Education Researchers (CHER), Moscow, Russia.

Ballerini, V. (2015) Global Higher Education Trends and National Policies: Access, Privatization, and Internationalization in Argentina, Annual Conference of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), Denver, CO.

TEACHING AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

BARUCH COLLEGE, MARX SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

- Instructor in “International Higher Education: Policies & Practices” Spring 2018

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE

- SPSS Lab Instructor “Statistical Methods for Public & Nonprofit Management” Fall 2017-Fall 2018
- Instructor in “Statistical Methods for Public & Nonprofit Management” Fall 2015-Fall 2018

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, STEINHARDT SCHOOL OF CULTURE, EDUCATION, AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

- Co-instructor in “Argentina: Advocacy & Education” Summer 2018 (Location: Buenos Aires, Argentina)
- Curriculum development and co-instructor in “Global Perspectives in Higher Education: Cuba” Summer 2015 (Location: Havana, Cuba)

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT-UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE SAN MARTÍN

- Lecturer in Qualitative Research Methods, 2009-2013

LANGUAGE AND TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Fluent in Spanish. Intermediate proficiency in Portuguese.
- Highly proficient in MS Office and Teams, WordPress, SPSS, N-Vivo, Dedoose.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS, RESEARCH/PRACTITIONER NETWORKS & SERVICE

- Member of TheDream.US Scholarship Selection Committee.
- Member of the Education & Immigration Working Group convened by [FWD.US](https://www.fwd.us)
- Invited to serve in the College Affordability Subcommittee of the Education Policy Committee for the Biden-Harris Campaign.

REFERENCES

Dr. Martha Kanter
Executive Director, College Promise Campaign;
U.S. Under Secretary of Education (2009-2013)

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Dr. Tanya Garcia
Deputy Secretary and Commissioner for
Postsecondary and Higher Education
Pennsylvania Department of Education (2020-2023)

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Farhad Asghar
Program Officer, Pathways to Postsecondary Success
Carnegie Corporation of New York

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Rachelle Sharpe
Chief of Staff
Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce
Development

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