

ACCJC Evaluation Team Bios



TEAM CHAIR - Dr. Frank Gornick, Chancellor, West Hills CCD:

Dr. Frank Gornick has been the Chief Executive Officer at West Hills CCD since 1994. Dr. Gornick has served as the past Chair of the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium and as the Governor's appointee for higher education on the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley. In 2009, he was appointed as a public representative for the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. He was elected by his peers to serve as the Chair of the Chief Executive Officers of the California Community Colleges Board beginning in July 2014. He earned an A.A. degree at West Hills College Coalinga and came back 28 years later as CEO. He holds Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from California State University, Sacramento and a Ph.D. from St. Louis University.



ASSISTANT - Dr. Kristin Clark, President, West Hills College Lemoore:

A higher education administrator for 22 years, Kristin Clark held positions such as the Vice President of Student Services, Dean of Enrollment Services, and Director of Admissions, Records, & Enrollment Technology at Orange Coast College. Kristin holds a B.S. in Business Administration, a M.A. in Educational Technology, and an Ed.D. in Higher Education Management from the University of Pennsylvania. She has co-authored white papers on student success and presented at symposiums in Canada and Kazakhstan. Her doctoral research examined the challenges California community colleges face during an economic downturn and the impact on community college presidents.



Ms. Shawn Abbott, Faculty, College of the Siskiyous:

Shawn Abbott is a full-time faculty member at College of the Siskiyous in the far north of California. Since 1999, Ms. Abbott has enjoyed teaching economics, accounting and business courses at the community college level. Ms. Abbott has a B.A. from the University of California in Economics and a M.B.A. from San Diego State University, as well as over a dozen years of experience working in the private sector as an economic consultant.



Mr. Gary Allen, ESL Instructor, Santa Rosa Junior College:

Gary Allen has been an English as a Second Language Instructor at Santa Rosa Junior College for 27 years. In that time, he served five years as department chair, was the college's first Student Learning Outcomes Coordinator, and served as the Accreditation Self Study Chair for the 2009 accreditation visit. In addition, he has received awards from the Academic Senate for staff development and sabbatical project, among others. The commitment and perseverance of his ESL students continue to be his inspiration. This is his fourth accreditation team.



Ms. Kristina Allende, Professor of English, Mt. San Antonio College:

Ms. Allende teaches English and literature and previously served as Department Chair. Kristina has experience with developing and reviewing curriculum, assessing the quality and integrity of distance education, and hearing student complaints. She served as the Faculty Accreditation Coordinator for the Mt. SAC's previous accreditation site visit in 2010. She is also serving as Coordinator for the college's upcoming site visit in 2017. Kristina has served on six accreditation site evaluation teams and has experience working on the majority of the accreditation standards.



Dr. Christina Leimer, Executive Director of Planning, Research & Institutional Effectiveness/ALO, College of Marin:

Dr. Christina Leimer is Executive Director of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness at College of Marin. She previously worked at Ashford University in San Diego, where she served as the Vice President for Planning and Effectiveness, CSU-Fresno, Seattle Central Community College and the University of Houston. Dr. Leimer earned bachelor and master degrees in sociology from the University of Houston, and her Ph.D. in human and organizational systems from Fielding Graduate University. With more than 20 years of experience and numerous publications and presentations, including invited keynotes, she brings expertise in institutional effectiveness, strategic planning and student learning outcomes assessment.



Mr. James Matthews, Librarian, Chabot College:

Jim Matthews is the Collection Development/Reference Librarian at Chabot College in Hayward, California. He was the faculty library coordinator from 1998 to 2011. He served on the California Community College Council of Chief Librarians from 2006 to 2015, serving as President from 2006-2011. At Chabot College, Jim was the faculty chair for the drafting of the 2009 and 2015 Self Evaluation Reports. He has also served on the Academic/Faculty Senate, both as a senator and as the Faculty Senate President. He has been a member on many committees in the college, within his district and statewide including Budget, Planning, Technology and Librarianship.



Ms. Meredith Plummer, Chief Business Officer, Copper Mountain College:

Meredith Plummer graduated from California State University Northridge in 1994 with a B.S. in Accounting and spent several years working as a CPA in public accounting. She started working for Copper Mountain Community College in 2007 as the Director of Fiscal Services. In 2012 she was promoted to the Chief Business Officer and her responsibilities include oversight of fiscal, facility, security, and maintenance operations.



Dr. Laura Ramirez, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Workforce Education, East LA College:

Laura M. Ramirez began her academic journey at East Los Angeles College and received her A.S. Degree in Mathematics. She then transferred to UCLA and received a B.S. Degree in Chemistry and later her Master Degree in Analytical Chemistry from California State University, Fullerton. More recently she completed her doctorate degree in Education with an emphasis in community college leadership from CSU Fullerton. She began her career in education at CSUF working with undergraduate students, then as Chair of the Science Department at Don Bosco Technical Institute. She was hired by East Los Angeles College to be the Chair of its Chemistry Department and was subsequently appointed as the Career Technical Education Dean.



Dr. Ryan Theule, Vice President of College of the Canyons-Canyon Country Campus & Grants Development, College of the Canyons:

In his role as VP, Dr. Ryan Theule is the primary campus administrator for a 70-acre off-site campus and oversees the coordination and operation of the many departments and services. With nearly fifteen years of experience in higher education, Ryan has worked in community college administration since 2007, having previously worked in public relations, student affairs, and administration for law and graduate schools. He earned B.A. and M.A. degrees in History from Stanford University, a second MA degree in Communication from Trinity International University, and an Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership from the University of Southern California.



Dr. Donald Wallace, Superintendent/President, Palo Verde College:

Dr. Wallace has served as Superintendent/President at Palo Verde College since 2013. Prior to his current position, he served as the Vice President of Administrative Services at Cosumnes River College (2007-2013). He was the Director of Facilities Management at Mt. Hood Community College in Gresham, Oregon from 1997 to 2007. Preceding this position, from 1991 to 1997, Dr. Wallace was a zone manager in the Facilities Management Department for Oregon Health Sciences in Portland, Oregon.



Dr. Lianna Zhao, Dean of Math, Science, and Engineering, Irvine Valley College:

Dr. Lianna Zhao was born and raised in Beijing, People's Republic of China. She attended the Capital University of Medical Sciences in Beijing and earned a Doctor of Medicine degree. After teaching in her graduate medical school and practicing for two years in China, she immigrated to the United States. Shortly after her arrival, Dr. Zhao obtained a M.S. degree in Biology from Northeast Louisiana University. She has taught at a four-year institution, a Chiropractic College, and community colleges for over 25 years. She was the Dean for the Science, Math, and Engineering Division at Imperial Valley College (IVC South), the Title V 2+2 Cooperative Grant Proposal co-author, and the Project Director.
