

# Lillianna Franco Carrera, PhD



Proposed Role: Researcher

## EXPERTISE

- Implementing equitable and culturally affirming practices in the field of education
- Developing, leading, and implementing qualitative research
- College choice and post-secondary career pathways
- Facilitating workshops and sessions to improve educational outcomes of all students

## 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 secondary to postsecondary education and considering various career pathways.

9 years of experience of qualitative research experience as it relates to designing and conducting research studies.

## LANGUAGES

- Spanish–Native

## Present Position

### *Researcher, American Institutes for Research (AIR) (2022–Present)*

Develops and conducts research related to secondary and postsecondary education to evaluate systems, processes, and practices as it pertains to college and career decisions and multicultural approaches to education. Designs and implements systemic change processes to improve the success of all students. Plan and execute professional development sessions, trainings and coaching in order to consult education staff and administration on implementing culturally affirming practices.

## Selected Professional Experience

### **Co-Lead and 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 states. Partnership between REL Midwest and various school districts to **support educators in making data-informed decisions focused on all students** by codeveloping an approach that aims **to improve sense of belonging, decrease disciplinary actions, and reduce 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 co-lead, I develop plans to implement this approach and facilitate trainings and coaching sessions for teachers and administrative school staff in understanding reports and developing actionable steps to improve sense of belonging for all students.

### **Qualitative Research Lead, Landscape Analysis, Redding Consortium for Educational Equity, (2024–Present)**

The Redding Consortium for Educational Equity has requested AIR to conduct a Landscape Analysis as they redistrict of the City of Wilmington. To inform the Consortium’s redistricting decisions AIR has focused on **the social drivers of health and education to understand the community assets and barriers that families and students experience when they try and**

**access health and education resources.** This research includes qualitative methods to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of those in the community. As the qualitative research lead I have organized the collection of data, conducted the interview protocols, consent forms, outreach protocol, coding analysis, analyzed and developed the final report. I also led a team of 3 individuals to support the implementation of interviews, analysis, and reporting.

### **Research Coordinator, Pathway Partnership Reviews, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), (2022–Present)**

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 all students 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 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.

### **Qualitative Research Lead, Credit Mobility Investment Research, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s Pathways Team, (2023-2024)**

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.

### **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 impacts all students leading 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 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

**Carrera, L.**, Chavarria, M., Mellor, L., Parsons, K., Desrochers, D. M., & Zhang, M. (2024). College Credit Mobility: Student Voices and Staff Perspectives on Time, Technologies, and Transfer Processes. *American Institutes for Research*.

Ashford-Hanserd, S., **Carrera, L. F.**, Hough, T. D., Moreno, T. D., Mouton, A. J., & Wallace, I. (2024). Influence of Community Cultural Wealth on Undergraduate Hispanic and Black Women's Persistence in the STEM+ C Workforce Pipeline. *Career and Technical Education Research, 49*(2), 47-64.

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.

Mason, J., Ramsay, L., Cirks, T., Rayyes, N., Allen, K., **Carrera, L. F.**, ... & Gilbert—CALCO, B. (2023). Maryland College and Career Readiness Empirical Study.

Ashford-Hanserd, S., **Carrera, L. F.**, Moreno, T., & Belcher, S. (2022). The COVID-19 Pandemic's Impact on Black or African American Undergraduate STEM+ C Students at a Hispanic Serving Institution. *Journal of Negro Education, 91*(3), 336-345.

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-Hanser, S., & **Carrera, L.** (2023, March). Effects of community cultural wealth on Black and Hispanic women’s persistence in undergraduate computing education. In *ASEE Annual Conference proceedings*. ASEE.

Ashford-Hanser, 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-Hanser, 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-Hanser, 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.