



### **Michele Siqueiros**

Since its founding in 2004, Michele Siqueiros has been the driving force behind the Campaign for College Opportunity, a California based nonprofit policy advocacy and research organization committed to ensuring more students can go to college and succeed. The daughter of a seamstress who then became the first in her family to go to college, Michele understands the transformative power of education and has dedicated her life to opening the doors of college opportunity.

Michele has made it possible for thousands of students to go to college and graduate because of the policy and budget reforms she has successfully championed, her unrelenting commitment to ensuring policies are implemented with fidelity, and her vigilance for keeping a close watch on the performance of the state's colleges and universities.

Michele's leadership has resulted in victories benefitting thousands of students including: a new, clearer pathway for students who transfer from community colleges to the state's four year universities; a public community college scorecard that provides students and their families with key performance metrics disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender; a package of legislation that mandates student success courses and orientation at the state's community colleges and eliminated the overreliance on placement exams granting students access to college level courses; greater investment in state financial aid programs including the expansion of state aid for undocumented students; and, millions more in state funding for the state's colleges and universities to expand the number of available seats for students and to improve student graduation rates.

Michele is successful because of the innovative way she brings together unlikely allies – California businesses, civil rights organizations, faith-based institutions, and students – to create a powerful voice in the State Capitol. She ensures that legislators, the media and key partners have the most up to date data on public higher education in California by producing nearly a dozen groundbreaking reports and briefs annually. No other entity in the state of California is regularly producing status reports on higher education with specific attention to disparities by race/ethnicity and recommendations for both policymakers and practitioners on how to improve outcomes.

Michele has championed a higher education agenda in California where both college access and college completion are valued equally and where it is no longer acceptable to stand by and allow generations of students to go without a college education. She makes it uncomfortable for colleges and universities to accept poor outcomes for students. She demands the attention of the state's legislature and Governor calling on them to adequately fund California's public colleges and universities while using those dollars to leverage better outcomes.

Michele believes that access to higher education is quintessential to the American Dream and an economic imperative. She should be recognized for the work she does every day walking the halls and educating members of the legislature, traversing the state gathering new allies in the work, shining light on the data nobody wants to talk about or address, creating solutions to the challenges we face in higher education, keeping the media focused on the student perspective, and inspiring young people across California to do their part to get a college education while assuring them she's holding the state accountable to do their part.

In her 16 years at the Campaign for College Opportunity (12 as President), she has built a strong, independent, and influential organization by raising over \$22 million dollars, assembling a team of experts and leaders in the field, championing major budget appropriations, securing historic higher education legislation and establishing a broad and influential network of over 12,000 coalition supporters. Under her direction the Campaign has released critical higher education research including prominent reports on college access and success rates, the lack of diversity amongst college leaders and faculty, the powerful return on investment for spending by the state in our colleges and universities, and the need for major improvements to close racial/ethnic gaps, fix transfer and reform remedial education at our colleges. Every day she is motivated by the many students who are working hard to reach their college dreams.

Michele has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Studies with Honors in Chicano/a Studies from Pitzer College and a Master of Arts in Urban Planning from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). She serves on the Boards of the California Endowment, the Alliance for a Better Community, the Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools, Community Coalition, and Pitzer College. In 2019 was appointed by Senate Pro Tem Leader Toni Atkins to the Student Centered Funding Formula Oversight Committee. In 2020 Governor Newsom asked her to serve on the California Higher Education Recovery with Equity Taskforce. She previously served on the California Student Aid Commission as a gubernatorial appointee.

Michele's believes in working toward a more just and equitable California where every student - regardless of their zip code, race/ethnicity, or income - can make their college dreams a reality.