

PRESENTER AND CONTENT FACULTY BIOS

James M. Alarid, Ph.D.

A native New Mexican, Dr. Jim Alarid was reared in the South Broadway and Arno neighborhoods in Albuquerque, NM. After majoring in Physical Education at the University of New Mexico, he entered the military. Upon the completion of his military service, he was appointed as a physical educator at Kennedy-Tomasita Middle School. His fifth period class changed his direction. This class was comprised of children with various disabilities. Realizing that his knowledge was limited he made his way back to school and earned a Master of Arts in Special Physical Education and a Doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction. Dr. Frank Papcsy took him under his wing and shaped his future. Dr. Alarid became a national expert in Special Physical Education. He began his University teaching career at UNM. He became an assistant professor in Special Education in 1974 at New Mexico Highlands. In 1977, he decided to become a "soft money" junkie and relocated to the University of Connecticut. At U Conn, he worked with the "grandfather of Special Physical Education" Dr. Hollis Fait. After spending three years in Connecticut, his desire to move back West overcame him. He moved to the University of Arizona and developed a graduate Special Physical Education Program. Again, this was a soft-money program. With federal money drying up in 1982, he moved back to New Mexico and began a two-year stint with the Office of Special Education at the New Mexico State Department of Education. In 1984, he returned to New Mexico Highlands University. Since 1984, he has held various administrative positions including Assistant to the Provost and Vice-President of Academic Affairs and (currently) Interim Dean of the School of Education. He teaches courses in Special Education and directs a CARF accredited program-Vistas Sin Limites @ NMHU, the State's first supported employment program. He facilitated the development and dissemination of the New Mexico Alternate Assessment and served as Chairman of the Governor's New Mexico Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. He also is a consultant to the Transition Cadre and Chairman of the Statewide Transition Coordinating Council.

Diane Bassett, Ph.D.

Diane is a Professor in the Division of Exceptionalities and Bilingual/ESL Education at the University of Northern Colorado. Her professional interests include working on behalf of adolescents and adults with disabilities, transition, self-determination, advocacy, and educational reform. She has taught as both a general and special educator in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education and in public and private schools. She has published in the area of inclusion, person-focused planning, and transition and standards-based education. She is a strong advocate of student responsibility and empowerment through the use of person-centered philosophies. Diane is also the Principal Investigator of Project TRAC (Transition Resources Across Communities) that emphasizes transition and standards-based education for students with high incidence needs.

Ginger Blalock, Ph.D.

Ginger is a Professor in Special Education in the College of Education, University of New Mexico, where primary areas of teaching and scholarship include career development and transition education, collaboration for inclusive education, and instructional methods in special education. For four years, she served as Director of the Division of Educational Specialties in the College of Education, overseeing Art Education, Early Childhood Multicultural Education, Mathematics/Science/Technology Education, and Special Education. Currently, she co-coordinates the 2002-05 Statewide Transition Initiatives, including the Statewide Transition Coordinating Council, the Transition Specialist Cadre, the Statewide Transition Participants and Services Project, the Summer Transition Institute, and the Transition Outcomes Project research and technical assistance. Service roles include alternate board membership in the Middle Rio Grande Business-Education Collaborative, office in the N.M. Division on Career Development and Transition, and membership in the Research Committee for the national Division on Career Development and Transition (within the Council for Exceptional Children). She earned all of her degrees at the University of Texas at Austin, in general and special education and taught at the elementary and secondary levels in special education.

Charlie Brittian

Charlie's career with Social Security began in Washington DC where she worked with Commissioner Shirley Chater. After working in the Commissioner's office for four years, she transferred to Philadelphia to become the Philadelphia Regional Community Relations Officer. She served in that position for four years before coming to Dallas. In Dallas she serves as the Regional Community Relations Officer and the TICKET to Work Project Manager for Region VI Social Security Administration.

Randy Costales

Randy has worked for The Arc of New Mexico since 1994 and is currently the Director of Empowerment and Community Building. He is the project director for The Arc AmeriCorps Project and The Arc's Administration on Developmental Disabilities Community Inclusion Project. He coordinates The Arc's self-advocacy initiatives and serves as an advisor to People First of Albuquerque and People First of New Mexico. He is also co-chair of the New Mexico Coalition on Aging and Developmental Disabilities. Randy has facilitated PATHs in Zuni, Pojoaque, Socorro and southern Dona Ana County.

Shirley Crawford and Be Little

Shirley Crawford is the Principal of Cloudcroft High School. Prior to that, she served as Assistant Principal at Hobbs High School and in numerous other roles throughout her career in education. Be Little has taught special education for 13 years, is Cloudcroft's Transition Coordinator, and now serves as the Special Education Director for the Cloudcroft Schools.

Marilyn D'Ottavio

Marilyn D'Ottavio is currently the Coordinator for Transition Services with the Albuquerque Public Schools and oversees the district programs that support students with disabilities as they prepare to transition to the adult world after graduation. She is the site administrator for the Community Education and Support Services (CESS) and Community Transition to Adult Programs (CTAP) programs that provide transition support for students between the ages of 18 and 22. In addition, she has worked as a Transition Specialist and Vocational Evaluation Specialist for most of her professional career. She was a member of the Statewide Graduation IEP Task Force that developed the new state regulations with regard to the Pathways to the Diploma and serves on the Statewide Transition Coordinating Council.

Lynn Griffin

Lynn Griffin and her husband moved to Albuquerque, NM in November 2001. Prior moving to NM she was a working mother and worked for 16 years as a parent advocate for her son, Patrick. She also has an older daughter, Nicole, who is currently a Masters Degree student in Washington DC. Her real passion was realized upon arriving in New Mexico as a chance meeting lead her to Parents Reaching Out which put her on her current path, helping children get the quality of education they deserve. She has been active in the STSC, participated in the Cohort B for LRE training, participates in Focus Monitoring through PED. Lynn is currently employed by Parents Reaching Out as a Family Liaison, where she assists families with their special education needs.

Sue Gronewold

Sue Gronewold is a consultant for the New Mexico State Department of Education, Special Education Office. She is the lead consultant for transition services and oversees New Mexico transition initiatives and activities. Sue facilitated the development of the State Department of Education's recommended IEP and Technical Assistance Manual. Sue is also the lead consultant for the New Mexico School-wide Positive Behavior Supports Initiative. Sue has over twenty years of experience in special education. Her experiences include teaching, work experience coordinator/supervisor, transition specialist and program specialist. She is a member of the Statewide Transition Coordinating Council, the Commission for the Blind's State Rehabilitation Council, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's State Rehabilitation Council, and the Commission for the Blind Education Stakeholder's Committee, the School Behavior Health Training Institute Work Group, and the Mental Health Design Team Work Group.

BonNet Gurule

BonNet Gurule is a long-time staff member at NMHU. She has worked for various programs as a NMHU career employee. These programs include Athletics, Careers, Student Cooperative Programs, Grants and Contracts, Housing, and Education. In her current position as Program Manager, she works with students that are employed as employment specialists for Viastas Sin Limites @ NMHU. Her responsibilities include; teaching students how to participate in Individual Service Plan meetings, write strategic plans, conduct vocational assessment profiles and to serve as a mentor to the students. She has a certificate in supported employment from the University of Virginia and has participated in many trainings provided by the New México Continuum of Care, sponsored by the New Mexico Department of Health.

Yvonne Hart

Yvonne Hart has:

- * worked with people in NM with Developmental Disabilities since 1970
- * taught Special Education for 8 years
- * developed & managed community based work force development programs for disadvantaged populations since 1984 including the first Supported Employment initiative in NM
- * worked as an Advocate on the implementation of the Jackson class action lawsuit to assist with first 250 transitions from the state hospitals to community placement
- * developed & implemented a quality improvement program for a community based agency which resulted in the agency being recognized for exemplary service in the 1996 Jackson Community audit
- * developed and managed a Welfare Reform program which served over 3000 families & which was nationally recognized as best practice for Latino populations by the Gaston Institute on Public Policy in 1998
- * managed the NM DVR " Whatever It Takes" federal demonstration project to develop work related transportation options for people with disabilities in NM.

Virginia (Ginny) Johnson, MSW

Ginny is Director of Planning and Development, New Mexico Department of Health Long Term Services Division. She has over 20 years experience with children and family services including protective services. She has managed the CYFD Foster Care Unit in Bernalillo County, the DOH LTSD Developmental Disabilities Waiver Program, and the Medically Fragile Waiver Program. Currently as Director of Planning, she has responsibility for the coordination of planning and development activities for the five programs of the Long Term Services Division, including:

- Developmental Disabilities Services (Waiver & State General Funds)
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Disabled and Elderly
- GAP, and
- IDEA Part C.

At this time, she and her staff are working on a Self-Directed Family Support pilot for individuals with developmental disabilities. She earned a BA degree from the University of Wisconsin in Social Work and a Masters of Social Work from New Mexico Highlands University.

Marcia Knight

Marcia Knight is an Education Administrator and Director for Tech Prep for the Career-Technical and Workforce Education Bureau of the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) since 2002. Prior to working at the PED Marcia taught Family and Consumer Economics at McCurdy School in Espanola NM where she was teacher of the year in 2000. Marcia has experience working in the garment industry, child care industry and the culinary industry. Marcia grew up in Indianapolis before receiving a BA in Home Economics from William Woods College in Fulton Missouri and graduate work from Sam Houston State University and Texas A&M Commerce. Marcia is married with two grown daughters.

Paula Kohler, Ph.D.

Paula D. Kohler, Ph.D. is a Professor in the Department of Educational Studies at Western Michigan University where she teaches and conducts research regarding effective transition education and services. Previously a senior research associate with the Transition Research Institute at the University of Illinois, Dr. Kohler has a background in business administration, educational leadership, career and technical education, and special education. Focused on improving outcomes of youth with disabilities, she has worked to extend transition-related research to practice at the state, regional, and local levels through research, evaluation, policy analysis, and professional development. Her work regarding effective secondary education and transition services includes identification of effective transition programs, transition-related competencies, career and technical education experiences of youth with and without disabilities, work-based education, program evaluation, transition policies, professional development strategies, and other aspects of transition-focused education. Her *Taxonomy for Transition Programming* is recognized around the US as an effective model for planning, implementing, and evaluating transition-focused education, and has influenced the implementation of transition services in a number of states. In 2001, Dr. Kohler received the Oliver P. Kolstoe award from CEC's Division on Career Development and Transition, and in 2005 the WMU College of Education Trailblazer Award, for her contributions through research and scholarship.

Denise Koscielniak

Denise is the new State Director of Special Education for New Mexico. She has served as principal in the Los Alamos Schools, assistant special education director in Santa Fe, and numerous other roles in her education career.

Larry Lorenzo

Larry Lorenzo has been a long time advocate in New Mexico. He has served on the Statewide Independent Living Council, Protection and Advocacy Board, State Rehabilitation Council, National Federation of the Blind NM Board, Disability and Health Advisory Committee etc. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science and a Master's Degree in Counseling Psyology. He has worked as a Computer Programmer, Mental Health Counselor, Voc Rehab Counselor and Disability Consultant.

Nannie Sanchez

Nannie Sanchez is a very active entrepreneur who currently works for the Center for Self-Advocacy, helping others with disabilities with her training module in the area of employment. She recently held her clerical job at APS for about seven years and is currently exploring various employment and extracurricular options.

Suzette Sandoval

Suzette Sandoval is the Apprenticeship Placement Specialist for the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation TRACE Apprenticeship Program. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from New Mexico State University, and studied school psychology at both the University of Northern Colorado and New Mexico State University. She holds a Specialist in Education degree (EdS) and is a licensed school psychologist. She has worked as a school psychologist in rural areas of the State, connecting special education students with resources. She has also worked as a Planner for the Department of Health Long Term Services Division. In the TRACE Program, she helps to place DVR clients into a variety of apprenticeship programs. She frequently visits the high schools, connects with DVR counselors and attends job fairs in order to provide information about the programs to individuals with disabilities.

Margo Segura and Marine Dominguez

These two women are the glue for Hispanic Media Company, a recent initiative to support Hispanic youth at risk of dropping out that began with Edward James Olmos and Carlos Santana. This New Mexico branch of the initiative is sponsored through New Mexico Highlands University.

Carmen Taylor

Carmen (Endlich) Taylor is currently the Program Manager for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's TRACE Program, a federally funded program from the U.S. Department of Education, Special Education Division Rehabilitation Services to increase options for people with disabilities. TRACE stands for Transition into Registered Apprenticeship, Careers and Employment. The TRACE program assists people with disabilities to enter employment in apprenticeship programs. The TRACE program does presentations in the schools to interest students in the quality career options available in apprenticeship.

Carmen has a Bachelor's degree from UNM in secondary education and a Master's Degree in School Administration from Boston State College. She has been a teacher, educational consultant, Hospitality Education training coordinator and an administrator in her professional career. She currently works for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation as a Special Projects Program Manager. She works with employers, job seekers, students, counselors and educational programs.

Lena Trujillo-Chavez

Lena Trujillo-Chávez began her career in education as a Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) Education teacher in rural New Mexico. As a FACS educator she trained students in the hospitality industry and the child care industry. Additionally, as in most rural schools, she taught middle school students in a FACS exploratory rotating wheel, which included Business Education, Agriculture Education and Technology Education. Lena then had the opportunity to work in a family owned Construction business, where she managed the office and worked closely with customers such as Sandia National Laboratories, the United States Air Force, local businesses and homeowners. She then returned to education as the Assistant Director for the New Mexico State Resource Center for Career and Technical Education teachers. For the last 14 years Lena has been with the Public Education Department, where she has had the opportunity to serve in various positions within the Student Nutrition Bureau, the Accreditation Unit, and now as the Bureau Chief for the Career-Technical and Workforce Education Bureau. In her current position, the bureau works primarily with high schools and Two-year Postsecondary Institutions. An integral part of the bureau's work is the New Mexico High School Initiative.

Lane Widner

Lane Widner is the Educational Administrator for Trades and Industry and Technology Education for the Career-Technical and Workforce Education Bureau of the New Mexico Public Education Department. Lane's background in education is a diverse one that has strong ties to agriculture and agricultural education. Lane grew up on a small family farm in Estancia, New Mexico. Lane was very involved in Career Education as a student at Estancia High School. Upon graduating from high school Lane took a year off from college to serve as the New Mexico State FFA president. After completing a year as the State FFA president, Lane enrolled in college at Eastern New Mexico University. Lane studied secondary agricultural education at ENMU, and completed his bachelor's degree in the spring of 1998. After receiving his bachelor's degree Lane accepted a position as the second teacher in the largest Agricultural Education program in the state, at Moriarty High School. Lane has also diversified his teaching experiences by teaching in one of the smallest districts in the state, Corona High School, where Lane was the lead teacher for three years. Lane continued his education, while working for New Mexico State University as the state director for the New Mexico Future Farmers of American Association. Lane received his master's degree in educational administration in December of 2004. Lane has worked for the New Mexico Public Education Department since October of 2004.