



Two Cal-Bridge Scholars Accept Faculty Positions in California Public Universities

Cal-Bridge Program Supports Women and People of Color to Diversify Public University Faculty and STEM Workforce

Pomona, Calif., May 2, 2023 – The Cal-Bridge program is pleased to announce that scholars Katy Rodriguez Wimberly and Manuel Paul have accepted tenure-track positions teaching at California state public universities starting in the Fall. This announcement helps to achieve the Cal-Bridge program's mission to diversify California public universities and the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) workforce.

[Cal-Bridge](#), a one-of-a-kind higher education program, provides a pathway for students who are underrepresented in the STEM professoriate and workforce (including women and people of color) in the California State University (CSU) system to pursue advanced PhD degrees through the University of California (UC) system and join the California science and technology workforce, including as public university faculty. Launched in 2014, the statewide, intersegmental program has faculty from all three levels of the California higher education system supporting scholars from their CSU undergraduate studies through their UC PhD studies by providing funding for tuition and research projects, professional development, as well as guidance from mentors.

Wimberly has accepted a tenure-track position at California State University, San Bernardino in the Department of Physics & Astronomy starting in the Fall, where she will teach classes in physics and astronomy and conduct astrophysics research with CSUSB undergraduates. An Army veteran, she attended California State University, Long Beach where she joined the Cal-Bridge program in 2015. Wimberly graduated with a B.S. degree in physics from Long Beach and went on to earn a PhD in astrophysics at UC Irvine in 2021. She received the

prestigious [NSF MPS-Ascend postdoctoral fellow](#) in astrophysics at UC Riverside. As a professor at CSUSB, Wimberly will remain part of the Cal-Bridge program as a faculty mentor to physics students at the university, thereby inspiring the next generation to follow in her footsteps. She will also become director of the statewide mentorship program of Cal-Bridge, joining the leadership of the program.

“The network of mentors and peers Cal-Bridge has helped me create has been invaluable in my successful astrophysics PhD program. I now have an incredible support system of similarly underrepresented astro grad students and mentors who actively work to build a more inclusive community.”

Manuel Pasqual Paul is another Cal-Bridge success story. Originally from San Bernardino County, Paul went to California State University, San Bernardino for his undergraduate program and majored in Applied Physics. He went on to University of California, Irvine for his PhD, where he was awarded an NSF GRFP fellowship in his first year. Paul accepted a tenure track faculty position at Cosumnes River College, a community college in Sacramento, CA, where he will be teaching physics and astronomy courses starting in August. Paul will also continue with Cal-Bridge, recruiting students at his new campus to apply to the program as they transfer to a CSU to complete their four-year BS degree.

“The Cal-Bridge network has benefitted me tremendously by connecting me with an advisor who supported and encouraged me. I would have never applied to graduate school without that support,” Paul said.

Alexander Rudolph, professor of physics and astronomy at Cal Poly Pomona founded Cal-Bridge and is the Executive Director of the expanding program.

“It has been an honor to work with Katy and Manuel and see their growth over the years. I know they will make a tremendous impact in their respective fields, as well as on the many women, people of color and first generation students who will see someone like them doing things they may never have dreamed possible,” said Rudolph. “This program is critical because more diverse faculty leads to a growth in gender, racial, and ethnic representation in the technology workforce more broadly by increasing the number of students from historically underrepresented groups completing degrees in STEM fields.”

Since 2014, the Cal-Bridge program has supported over 230 talented women, people of color and first generation college students. Currently, 75 Cal-Bridge scholars are in PhD programs with four others having received or about to receive PhD degrees, including Katy and Manuel. The program has received \$13.9 million in funding from various sources including the State of California, the National Science Foundation. The most recent funding allocation of \$5 million came from the State of California in 2022 and was secured by Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris of Irvine who was the chief sponsor of the effort to fund the program.

“Breaking down barriers to entry into STEM fields for historically underrepresented groups and diversifying California’s public university professoriate will help California continue to thrive as a world-class hub for innovation,” she said.

For more information, visit www.calbridge.org.

About Cal-Bridge: The Cal-Bridge program has the mission to create a comprehensive, end-to-end pathway for undergraduates from the diverse student population of the CSU system through graduate school to a PhD, postdoctoral fellowship, and ultimately membership in the professoriate and science and technology workforce. Students in the program are referred to as Cal-Bridge scholars.

The program is a partnership between 9 University of California (UC), all 23 California State University (CSU), and the 116 community college campuses in California, thus fulfilling the promise of cross-segmental cooperation envisioned in the [California Master Plan for Higher Education](#). Scholars are recruited from CSU and community college campuses across the state, with the help of local faculty and/or staff liaisons at each campus. Community college students transfer to a participating CSU to join the program.

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