

A stylized graphic of an apple with a thick black outline and a light yellow-green fill. The apple has a short stem with two leaves, one of which is partially cut off by the right edge of the frame. The background is a solid purple color with a subtle pattern of small white dots.

partners in Education

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY,
POMONA & PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

**SPONSOR A FUTURE TEACHER
AWARDS CEREMONY**

February 26, 2026

The Restaurant at Kellogg Ranch

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CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY,
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AWARDS CEREMONY

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Partners in Education

Partners in Education is a coalition of academic and community leaders dedicated to advocating for quality education and educational development at Cal Poly Pomona and in surrounding communities. Every year, PIE provides fellowships of \$5,000 to support students during their clinical practice experience, an essential component of the credential program. Since 2006, the group has awarded 330 fellowships to teacher candidates.

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Special Thanks

to the College of Education and Integrative Studies for their contribution of grant funds for some of tonight's fellows as well as to Provost and Academic Vice President, Dr. Terri Gomez and University Advancement Vice President Frances Teves for their marketing and administrative support.

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Enrique Hernandez Becerra

Single subject in physical education



Enrique plans to teach high school, primarily ninth- and tenth-grade students, whom he sees as being at a pivotal stage in exploring their interests and goals. Enrique's long-term goals as an educator are to continue giving back to the community he grew up in by supporting the students he teaches both academically and personally. He wants to build strong connections with students and, when appropriate, their families, with the hope of becoming a trusted mentor and role model. In the future, Enrique would like to pursue an administrative role. In his spare time, he enjoys attending sporting events and exploring new places. He also values spending time with his family and friends, as well as playing video games. Enrique would love to have dinner with Muhammad Ali because Muhammad Ali was not afraid to speak up, even when it came at a great personal cost.



James Vincent Beckner

Single subject in social sciences



James would like to teach tenth grade world history. His graduate research focuses on secondary world history curriculum and aims to promote a more balanced approach that highlights global connections and reduces eurocentrism. In addition to shaping students' global perspectives, James hopes to help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health, particularly anxiety. By fostering an open, supportive classroom environment, he wants struggling students to feel seen, understood, and less alone. Long term, James hopes to pursue a doctorate, become a university professor, and contribute to curriculum development and advising. In his spare time, James loves playing the guitar, watching and playing soccer, cooking, and traveling with his partner. He would love to have dinner with Abraham Lincoln.

Eliza Monzerat Cordova

Multiple subject



Eliza would like to teach kindergarten and then, eventually, third grade. She hopes to teach at a school that prioritizes inclusivity, collaboration, and community engagement, where teachers are encouraged to connect learning to real-world experiences. She wants every student to know that they are seen, supported, and loved for exactly who they are. Eliza would like to be the kind of teacher who not only helps students master the subjects they study but also helps them believe in themselves. Eliza's long-term goals as an educator are to become a college professor so that she can help be a part of the process of creating other well-rounded professionals. In her spare time, Eliza likes to read, create collages, volunteer, garden, and go on hikes with her Rottweiler, Darla. She would like to have dinner with the Chinese philosopher, Confucius.



Everett Elias

Single subject in history



Everett would like to teach high school students. He wants to hold a space where students feel safe to read and discuss controversial topics. He hopes to provide students with the support, community, and tools necessary to succeed in a world where we all belong and have the right to succeed in life. Everett plans on being a positive force in the lives of his students. Everett's long-term goals are to earn a doctorate and create a curriculum based on democratic responsibility, with the foundational focus on the underappreciated legacy left behind by the civil rights tradition. In his spare time, Everett enjoys golfing, fishing, collecting Pokémon cards, watching anime, getting tattoos, and hanging out with his cat. He would love to have dinner with author James Baldwin because Everett feels that he is quite possibly the most underappreciated intellectual in American history.





Isabel Raygoza Espinoza

Multiple subject



Isabel would like to teach the younger elementary grades. She enjoys interactions with the youngest children because they tend to have the most open minds and hearts. They learn foundational skills in the first few years of schooling that will last them a lifetime. Inspired by her mother's 35-year career as an elementary teacher, she aims to become a confident educator and a source of support for new teachers. She hopes to build a reputation that represents her passion, commitment, and care for the well-being of her students and school community. In her spare time, Isabel likes to dance and sings in a choir. She would love to have dinner with Rita Moreno because she is the first Latina to win an EGOT (Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony Awards) and is a proud women's rights activist while championing cultural representation.



Lisa Frank-Baldomar

Single subject in social sciences



Lisa chose teaching to address the lack of representation of Black women in history education and to create a safe, supportive classroom where students can be themselves. She hopes to teach eighth-grade U.S. history or twelfth-grade ethnic studies and is excited to support future generations in an evolving field. Lisa would also like to introduce wellness clubs and cultural programs for students. Long term, Lisa aims to create community and guide students on their academic journeys. Even if students don't choose the academic route after high school, she wants them to feel supported and know that they can get guidance from her. In her spare time, Lisa likes to crochet, hike, and explore fashion. She would love to have dinner with Dr. Angela Davis because she enjoys Angela's writings and feels her role in the civil rights movement is overlooked.

Brittney Gudino

Single subject in social sciences



Brittney would like to teach tenth grade world history. She is motivated by a drive to build conscious and well-educated global citizens and believes that a course in world history best aligns with that vision. She hopes to provide her students with a safe environment to be challenged and make mistakes in. Brittney wants to remove the shame students often feel when approaching a new skill and replace that shame with excitement. She was inspired to go into teaching by the amazing educators in her own life, many of whom made positive impacts on her personal development and life trajectory. Brittney's long-term goals are to eventually teach at a college or university level. She also envisions herself writing various articles or books as part of her journey as an educator. In her spare time, Brittney likes to travel, read, and exercise. She also likes to go cafe-hopping and hiking. She would love to have dinner with Cleopatra.



Stacey Hernandez

Education specialist, mild to moderate support needs



Stacey decided to go into teaching after working with children with autism as a registered behavior technician. She loved watching their progress and celebrating their successes as they overcame challenges. Stacey would like to teach kindergarten or first grade because children at that age are full of energy and are at a critical point in their development where they can be set up for success by giving them the support they need. Stacey's long-term goals include working in advocacy roles as a career teacher and collaborating with local policymakers to propose policies that benefit students. Eventually, she would like to open an inclusive preschool that serves both neurotypical and neurodivergent students. In Stacey's spare time she enjoys going to different coffee shops and trying new coffee drinks. She also likes to garden and rehabilitate plants. Stacey would love to have dinner with Dr. Maria Montessori and learn about her experiences as one of the first women attending medical school in Italy.





Hannah Mari Kearns

Multiple subject



Hannah wants to teach upper elementary students. She plans to be a teacher who cares and makes her students feel seen, valued, and welcome in her class. She wants to be a trusted adult that her students trust and feel comfortable with. Hannah's long-term goals as an educator are to teach all grades and to be successful in each. She also plans to obtain her single subject credential in math and hopes to teach high school math after she teaches in elementary school. She would also like to be an assistant principal at some point in her career. In her spare time, Hannah likes to go hiking, trying new foods, playing games, and spending time with her family and dogs. She would love to have dinner with Susan B. Anthony because Hannah feels that she was the fire that lit the women's suffrage and anti-slavery movement.



Vanessa Kelenjian

Multiple subject



Vanessa would like to teach third through fifth graders because she enjoys working with students who are developing independence and a love for learning. She hopes her students think she is caring, patient, and someone who makes learning fun. Vanessa's mom has been the biggest influence on her decision to become a teacher. Her mom was an elementary teacher, and growing up, watching her mom impact students' lives inspired her to follow in her footsteps. Vanessa's long-term goals as an educator are to become a principal so she can support both students and teachers, help build a positive school culture, and make a lasting impact on the community. In her spare time, Vanessa likes to go to the gym. She would like to have dinner with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. because his leadership and fight for equality inspire her to want to make a difference in the world.

Kaylie Merrill

Multiple subject



Kaylie wants to teach transitional kindergarten through first grade, where students develop foundational skills and attitudes toward learning. She is passionate about using developmentally appropriate strategies to build confidence, problem-solving, and strong academic and social foundations. Kaylie's long-term goals as an educator are to get her master's in education. She also wants to give back to student teachers by welcoming them into her classroom once she has been an educator for over five years. Kaylie also wants to grow her skills by attending seminars and skill-building activities for educators. In her spare time, Kaylie enjoys playing Animal Crossing, reading, and taking walks or hikes with her dog and fiancé. She would love to have dinner with Betty Friedan because her work in advocating for women's rights and equality has had a profound impact on education and society.



Alexia Montantes

Single subject in adapted physical education



Alexia knew from a young age that she wanted to be a teacher. She decided to become a PE teacher following a long career of playing sports. During her undergraduate degree program, she learned about adapted sports and parasports, such as goalball, beep baseball, and wheelchair basketball. She then collaborated with a professor to create and teach an adapted sports lab to undergraduate kinesiology students. Alexia wants to be an advocate for students with disabilities. She is a firm believer that through adapted sports, students can learn about disabilities and ableism within our society while having fun. Alexia's long-term goals are to share adapted sports with other PE teachers so that they can incorporate adapted sports lessons into their curriculum. Alexia enjoys collecting and building Legos, reading, and trying new foods. She would love to have dinner with the Virgin Mary.





Yael Viviana Oregel

Single subject in English



Yael would like to teach high school English because of the novels she read as a high school student and wants to incorporate various forms of media and student voices into her classroom to help bridge the gap between texts and larger societal issues. She wants to help students build critical thinking skills, empathy, and most importantly, confidence in their voice as they enter their adult lives. Yael's long-term goal as an educator is to strengthen relationships with parents and the community to help improve and promote academic excellence. She plans to pursue a master's degree in education and specialized certifications that will benefit her students. Yael enjoys photography, collecting and listening to vinyl records, and traveling across Mexico. She would love to have dinner with Emily Dickinson because Dickinson led her life as a strong woman writer in a field that was dominated by men and challenged 19th century norms.



Mark Palacios

Single subject in physical education



Mark chose teaching to make a positive impact through movement, structure, and consistency, and hopes to teach high school physical education. Physical education gave Mark the confidence, discipline, and a sense of belonging growing up, and he wants to provide that same experience for his students. He enjoys working with older students because he can help them build lifelong fitness habits, confidence, and accountability that they can carry into adulthood. Mark's long-term goals are to become a strong, respected PE teacher, to continue coaching, and to possibly take on leadership or mentoring roles within a school or district. In his spare time, Mark competes in CrossFit competitions, coaches, and binge watches television shows. He also served four years in the United States Marine Corps and has seven cats. Mark would love to have dinner with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. because Mark admires his ability to bring people together and create change.

Sofia Rangel

Multiple subject



Sofia wants to teach elementary students to become lifelong learners who give back to their communities through meaningful action. She would like to teach elementary school students at different grade levels to learn about diverse age groups and the various teaching practices that best suit each grade level. Sofia's long-term goals as an educator are to learn different teaching strategies to best support students of all backgrounds and abilities and to create an environment in which students feel comfortable talking about social justice issues in school and their community in order to make positive and lasting change. In her spare time, Sofia enjoys reading, going on walks with her family and her dog, and watching comedy TV. She would love to have dinner with Rosa Parks because she inspires people to stand up for what is just.



Juan Francisco Rodriguez Jr.

Single subject in mathematics



Juan wants to teach high school. He feels that by teaching math to high schoolers, he can truly make an impact because math is critical during these years and he wants to help guide his students through it. Juan decided to go into teaching to give back to the community. He feels that the community he was raised in has influenced who he is today, and so he wants to be able to do the same. Juan's long-term goals as an educator are to create such a profound impact on his students that they give back to their communities as well. He not only wants his students to learn math, but also hopes they learn valuable life skills too. In his spare time, Juan likes to play soccer and watch soccer, football, and baseball. He is also an avid anime watcher. Juan would love to have dinner with Alexander the Great because of how young he was when he created an empire.





Joshua Robert Rogers

Single subject in adapted physical education



Joshua would like to teach physical education in either an elementary or middle school, with a strong preference for working as an adapted physical education teacher. He is especially drawn to these grades because they're crucial for building motor skills, confidence, and a positive relationship with physical activity. He is passionate about making classrooms inclusive, supportive, and empowering for students of all abilities. Joshua's long-term goal is to teach adaptive physical education so he can advocate for inclusion and make sure every student has access to meaningful and empowering physical activity, building confidence, independence, and a positive relationship with movement. Eventually, he'd like to take on leadership and mentoring roles within the school. In his spare time, Joshua enjoys hiking and spending time outdoors with his dog, Xena. Joshua would love to have dinner with baseball great and civil rights activist Jackie Robinson.



Thomas Richard Silverman

Single subject in physical education



Thomas would like to teach high school physical education, health, and sports psychology because he has a passion for health and wellness and wants to teach students how to better their overall health. When Thomas was 15, his mother passed away from cancer. It was his high school PE teacher and basketball coach, along with other teachers, who were instrumental in his life during that time. They inspired him to pursue a career in teaching and pay it back. Thomas's long-term goal is to inspire young people to pursue what they are passionate about. He believes life is all about finding what you love and doing it as often as you can. Thomas enjoys basketball, fitness, and spending time with his loved ones. He loves to watch movies, play videogames, and his newest obsession is golf! Thomas would love to have dinner with basketball player Kobe Bryant because Kobe was his favorite athlete growing up and he loves Kobe's perspective on life.

Caitlin Skinner

Multiple subject



Caitlin would love to teach second and third graders. She feels these two grades are right in that “sweet spot” where the students are still young enough to be shaped, but old enough to be fairly self-sufficient. Caitlin hopes her students see her as a figure that they can go to talk about anything. She wants them to feel welcomed in her classroom and safe to try new things and make mistakes. Caitlin’s long-term goal is to get her master’s degree. She wants to stay in the classroom for as long as she can because she finds a lot of joy in being in a classroom setting. In her spare time, Caitlin loves to sew and read. She sews everything from screen accurate Disney Princess costumes to everyday pieces that she wears all the time. She is a big fantasy and romance reader and owns over 100 books. Caitlin would love to have dinner with actress Audrey Hepburn.



Alexandra Tejada

Single subject in biological sciences



Alexandra hopes to teach high school biology and possibly chemistry, driven by her passion for the sciences and her desire to help students see how science connects to their everyday lives. She hopes her students see her not only as their teacher, but also as a mentor who supports them academically and personally. She wants them to feel comfortable coming to her for guidance and to know that she genuinely cares about their growth. Alexandra’s long-term goal is to teach science and then eventually take on a leadership role, such as a department chair or the Dean of Sciences, to support and guide science education at a broader level. In her spare time, Alexandra enjoys working out, hiking, and maintaining an active lifestyle. She would love to have dinner with Dr. Rosalind Franklin because she was the one to actually discover DNA’s structure and Alexandra wants to honor her work and give her the recognition she deserves.





Edgar Perez Valdes

Single subject in science



Edgar hopes to teach high school biology because he believes students at this level are curious, creative, and eager to explore the world around them. He wants to guide them through hands-on, inquiry-based, and interactive learning experiences, helping them see that science is not something to fear, but something to explore, question, and master. He wants them to see failure not as something bad but as an invitation to think differently and to try again. Edgar's long-term goals are to pursue a doctorate in immunology, to run his own lab, and provide students with research opportunities in host pathogen interactions and therapeutic targets. Edgar loves to visit museums, read books about science and philosophy, visit new cities, and to try out local coffee shops. He would love to have dinner with Socrates so they can discuss his teaching philosophy.



Lizbeth Valdivia-Jauregui

Single subject in adapted physical education



Lizbeth hopes to teach high school students, helping them build healthy mindsets, achieve their goals, and understand the power of movement through physical education. She is also passionate about raising awareness of community gardens in the Inland Empire and sharing the resources that have supported her throughout her own life. Lizbeth's long-term goals as an educator are to develop a school garden and integrate it into her PE classes, so students can learn about vegetables and how to grow their own food. In her spare time, Lizbeth loves to sing, strength train, and explore herbal remedy stores all around the country. She would love to have dinner with Harriet Tubman because her blind faith and intuition always guided her through life. Lizbeth considers her a hero and a freedom fighter who fought for justice.



Vanessa Villasenor

Multiple subject



Vanessa plans to teach elementary school after her experience with At-Promise Youth, where she saw the importance of providing students with both academic and social-emotional support before adolescence. She hopes to make a positive impact by building strong teacher-student relationships through social-emotional learning, establishing clear classroom routines, and learning about her students' cultural backgrounds and interests. Long term, Vanessa aims to pursue professional development, maintain a culturally responsive and equitable classroom, foster a love of learning in her students, and eventually move into an administrative role. Outside the classroom, Vanessa is a coffee blogger, exploring and recommending coffee shops to family and friends. She also enjoys dancing, baking, reading, writing stories, learning to make lattes, entertaining her cat, and working out. She would love to have dinner with anthropologist Margaret Mead to gain insight from her work studying culture and society.

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