

Welcome from Presidential Sponsor, Soraya M. Coley

It is a pleasure to send my greetings once again to each of you as members of the ACE Women's Network of Southern California.

In 1977, California was among the first three states to establish what is now the precursor of the ACE Women's Network. Then — just as it does now — the Network endeavored to support the advancement of women in higher education leadership. Now, almost a half-century later, our work remains just as relevant and just as urgent as at the Network's founding. Through formal mentorship, leadership training, mutual support, and a host of other efforts, each of us have the opportunity to continue this critical legacy and mission.



With the winter break and the New Year upon us across our various campuses, I hope you will feel resolved in supporting one another and reaching out to colleagues who may benefit from the Network's programming.

Thank you for being a part of the ACE Women's Network of Southern California, and please accept my best wishes for a healthy and happy holiday season.

Our Network's New State Chair, Olukemi Sawyerr



During the summer, our Network welcomed a new State Chair! Olukemi "Kemi" Sawyerr currently serves as the Associate Vice President for Academic Innovation at Cal Poly Pomona. She has over 30 years of experience in higher education as a Professor of Business Administration, faculty director, campus administrator, collaborator, and leader. Upon accepting this new role, Sawyerr applied her expertise in academia, entrepreneurship, organizational theory, and management to challenge the Planning Committee to advance its efforts in planning for this year's virtual programming as well as returning to in-person events. To do so, the Planning Committee revisited the Network's history, purpose, vision, mission, and core principles.

The Network's Purpose, Vision, Mission, and Core Principles

Purpose

The primary purpose of the ACE Women's Network of Southern California is to develop and implement networking, professional development and advocacy programs, and initiatives for campuses in the Southern California region.

Vision

The ACE Women's Network of Southern California will be recognized as the premier vehicle for connecting women at all levels of higher education in the region, providing support to further professional development and advancement, and transforming higher education locally, nationally, and globally.

Mission

The ACE Women's Network of Southern California facilitates the networking of women interested in pursuing leadership opportunities in higher education, allows for the sharing of best practices, and enables local leadership training. The Network draws from the resources of ACE's Inclusive Excellence Group and provides a means for implementing the IDEALS core principles.

Core Principles

Programs and events hosted by the ACE Women's Network of Southern California align with the core principles known as **IDEALS** which:

- I**dentify women leaders
 - D**evelop their leadership abilities
 - E**ncourage the use of those abilities
 - A**dvance women's careers
 - L**ink them to other women and mentors
- S**upport women in mid- and executive-level positions throughout their careers

The Network's Sub-Committees

This year the Southern California Network developed three goals:

- Goal 1: Develop a three-year strategic plan (fall 2021 to spring 2024)
- Goal 2: Develop a governance structure
- Goal 3: Create programming and events for three years (fall 2021 to spring 2024)

To address these goals, three new sub-committees were formed.

Strategic Planning Sub-Committee

Led by Olukemi Sawyerr (Cal Poly Pomona) and Teshia Roby (Cal Poly Pomona)

The Network's Strategic Planning sub-committee identified areas of improvement and developed a realistic action plan which included four strategic initiatives:

- Develop a Governance Structure for Sustainability
- Develop an Infrastructure to Determine Event Registration Fees to Sustain the Network
- Develop and Implement Strategies for Preparing Women for the Leadership Pipeline
- Provide Leadership Opportunities to Cultivate Women's Talent

Members of the Strategic Planning sub-committee include ODessa-Elise Downing (Cal Poly Pomona); Margaret Garcia (CSU Los Angeles); Tara Giblin (Orange Coast College); Cassandra Horii (Cal Tech); and Jennifer Strobel (The Chicago School of Psychology).

Governance Structure Sub-Committee

Led by Shokoufeh Mirzaei (Cal Poly Pomona) and Shanthi Srinivas (CSU San Bernardino)

The Governance sub-committee formed an unprecedented structure for the Southern California Network. The new governance structure outlines seven areas: Membership, Leadership Roles & Responsibilities; the Board of Directors; an Advisory Council; Members-at-large; Selection & Terms; Vacancies, Departures, and Succession Planning. The final draft is pending approval.



Members of the Governance Structure sub-committee include Alison Baski (Cal Poly Pomona); Kerry Johnson (CSU, Long Beach); Cheryl Koos (CSU, Dominguez Hills); and Irene Matz (CSU, Fullerton).

Programming & Events Sub-Committee

Led by Sarah Calderon (Cal Poly Pomona) and Bharti Sharma (Cal Poly Pomona)

After analyzing data collected from past events, the Programming & Events sub-committee set out to build stronger networking relationships among women in higher education and create a pipeline of women in leadership. For this reason, each academic year will have a unique focus and theme for programs and events. The 2021-2022 theme is "Networking and Mentorship." In addition to hosting

events that focus on this year's theme, the sub-committee is developing the early stages of a new long-term mentoring program. The program, which is expected to launch in fall 2023, will:

- Pair faculty and staff with senior women leaders
- Provide a curriculum with learning outcomes
- Incorporate coaching, sponsoring, and job-shadowing

Members of the Programming & Event sub-Committee include Claudia Catota (CSU Bakersfield); Tracie Costantino (CalArts); ODessa-Elise Downing (Cal Poly Pomona); Tari Hunter (Cal Poly Pomona); Theresa Navar-Rodriguez (Cal Poly Pomona); Lucinda Schell (Cal Poly Pomona); and Helen Yniguez (Cal Poly Pomona).

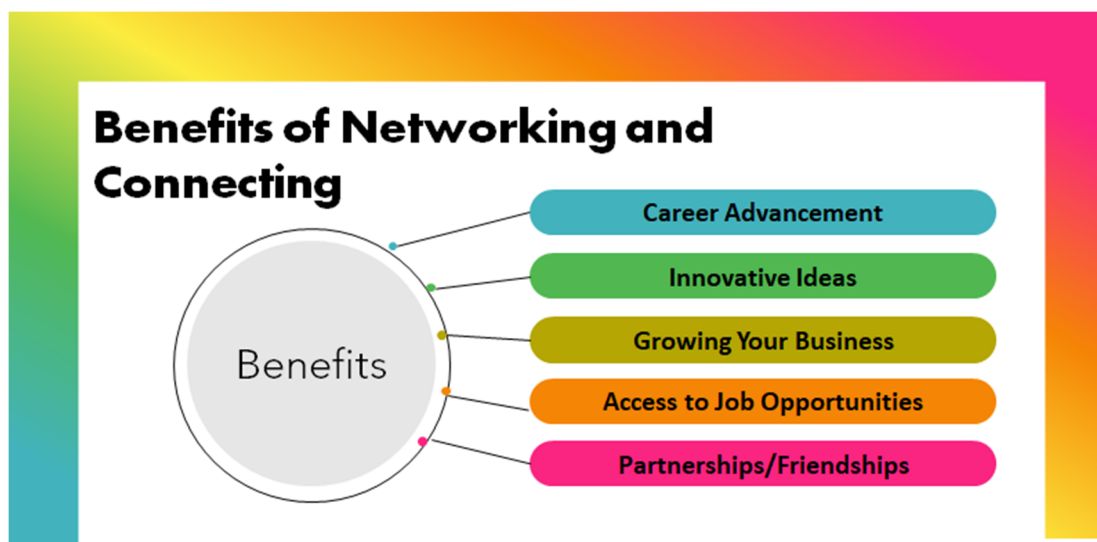
Fall 2021 Professional Development Programs

Networking & Building Relationships



Networking & Building Relationships, our first Connect & Learn of the academic year, was held in October via Zoom. Iris S. Levine, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Cal Poly Pomona, opened the 90-minute interactive session with a warm welcome and Bharti Sharma served as the moderator. Andrea (Andy) Handy, Learning & Development Consultant, immediately addressed the common barriers and fears that are sometimes associated with networking. Andy shared a profound statement that continues to

resonate: "Networking is knowing more people; Connecting is knowing people more". Providing a clear distinction between the two allowed the 60 participants to change the way we traditionally think about networking as well as gain a deeper understanding of the benefits of Networking, Connecting, and Building Relationships. These three leadership tools (used both personally and professionally) are strongly related to Career Advancement, Access to Job Opportunities, Innovative Ideas, Growth, Partnerships, and Friendships.



As the conversations continued, women were encouraged to join breakout rooms and complete an exercise that author [Susan McPherson](#) coined as the "Gather, Ask, Do Method" in her book [The Lost Art of Connecting](#). The [Gather, Ask, Do](#) Method is three-part process which focuses on developing relationships that are fulfilling and allowed participants to:

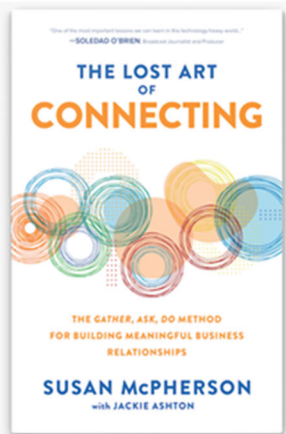
- Gather information needed to develop questions
- Ask meaningful questions, listen actively, and exchange details
- Do one task that will help in reaching the goal
- The “gather” activity included a self-reflection to define our personal definition of networking, examine our motivations, acknowledge our feelings, determine our strengths and skills, share our personality types, and declare a personal goal. The “ask” activity was a thought-provoking session of actively listening and asking purposeful questions about other’s experiences, desires, goals, and challenges in effort to build rapport and understand someone on a deeper level. The “do” activity was the most important of all; it required participants to follow up and take actions with other attendees to continue with developing the relationship and build trust.

For those who were not able to attend this event, the [Networking & Building Relationships video](#) is available on the ACE Women’s Network of Southern California’s website. An additional resource for networking, building relationships, and connecting is [The 7 Pillars of Connecting with Absolutely Anyone](#).

Tips for Connecting

- Gather
- Ask
- Do

Most importantly, have fun!



Networking 2.0

Contribution from Bharti Sharma, Cal Poly Pomona

The November Connect & Learn was a sequel to the October event since networking continues to be a popular request among attendees. This year our focus is to continue to develop networks and relationship building. The relationships in the future can potentially lead to finding mentors or sponsors—a topic which we will continue to explore in Spring 2022.

State Chair Olukemi Sawyerr opened the event and introduced Presidential Sponsor Soraya Coley. In her brief and impactful message, President Coley talked about her academic journey; she mentioned how her peers and mentors identified her leadership talent. In every leadership position she held, she always focused on doing her job impactfully. President Coley believes in inclusive leadership, and she is a mentor to many students, faculty, and staff. President Coley explained, with an analogy, that mentors and sponsors could provide the boots and straps to empower mentees on their leadership journeys.

In Networking 2.0, Andrea Handy returned as the facilitator and Sarah Calderon helped with the event moderation. Handy re-emphasized the importance of networking and practicing the "gather, ask, and do" method. The attendees practiced the concept through activities designed for the breakout rooms. The first breakout room activity encouraged all group members to identify and share the five strengths that they possess; besides this, all participants would collectively design three questions that will be relevant for networking. The second breakout room consisted of new participants; each participant brought a question they created in breakout room one. The moderator and facilitators followed up with a Q&A session, then discussed what participants enjoyed or gathered from both breakouts. There was also an opportunity for participants to share contact information. The event ended with closing remarks from Olukemi Sawyerr. The feedback from the participants was very positive. In the future, we will continue to provide meaningful professional development activities through ACE.

*Women's Leadership Workshops & Reading Group, hosted by the CSU Dominguez Hills
Contribution from Laura Talamante, CSU Dominguez Hills*

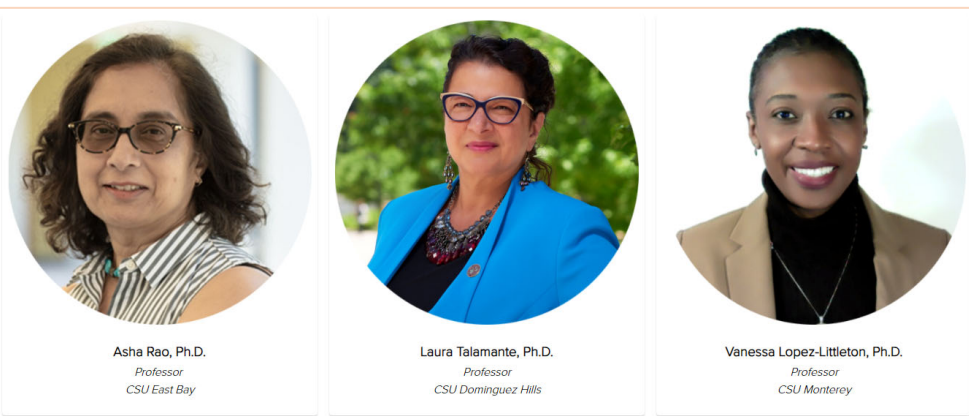
Several networks and organizations continue to offer professional development events for women leaders. The CSU Dominguez Hills Women's Leadership Workshops and Reading Group created a community across colleges and campus divisions for shared professional development and dialogue. The two main venues developed in academic year 2019-2020 are the monthly fall and spring Women's Leadership Development Workshops and the recently instituted Women's Leadership Reading Group, which began meeting monthly in summer 2020. The workshops continued through academic year 2020-2021, and the pandemic offered the ability to expand our offerings to the CSU system.

The objectives for the workshops are to provide CSUDH faculty, staff, and administrators the opportunity to learn from and engage with experienced female leaders in higher education, especially those within the CSU system. The reading group engages scholarly publications related to the advancement of female leadership in higher education and related issues of gender equity. The CSUDH Women's Leadership Workshops aspirational goals are to create a campus culture that understands, acknowledges, and takes specific actions to address institutional and cultural barriers women still face in higher education. We provide simple yet effective ways for transformational change through the creation of a campus-wide learning community that welcomes all employees regardless of rank. Workshop topics included:

- Developing the Leadership CV
- Pursuing External Leadership Networks
- Negotiating Positions & Salary in the CSU
- Leading from Where You Are & Living the Advice You Give
- Female Leadership, Intersectionality, & White Privilege
- Working at CSUDH & Pursuing Advanced Degrees
- Mentoring, Sponsorship, & Being Your Authentic Self

Previous [CSU-wide workshop](#) topics include [When Women Lead and the Transformation of the CSU Presidency](#), [When Women Lead & Demystifying Running for Office in the CSU System](#), and [Building Women's Leadership Networks in the CSU](#). The Building Women's Leadership Network event was held in October when CSU Dominguez Hills partnered with the Academic Senate of the CSU. Hosted by Nicole Rodriguez, Ed.D. (Director – Career Center, CSU Dominguez Hills) and Kitty M. Fortner, Ed.D.

(Associate Professor, CSU Dominguez Hills), the workshop featured guest panelists Asha Rao, Ph.D. (Professor, CSU East Bay); Laura Talamante, Ph.D. (Professor, CSU Dominguez Hills); and Vanessa Lopez-Littleton, Ph.D. (Professor, CSU Monterey).



ACE Women's Network of Northern California

Our sister Network in Northern California also hosted an [event](#) in October. [Building Your personal Success Team in Higher Education: Creating a Mentor Network as a Staff Member](#) taught participants the importance of a mentor network, described strategies for finding and cultivating mentors, and shared lessons from women leaders. Additionally, the Northern California Network hosted an event for Caretakers. The informal virtual gathering is the first in a series of small networking events. The session allowed attendees to connect with other women who work while taking care of family members. They learned about new practices and were able to support one another as wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, and friends.



Upcoming Programs and Events

Many Paths/Many Guides: Leadership & Mentoring for Academics – Thursday, January 13, 2022

The Northern California Network invited three women leaders from different kinds of institutions and from different parts of the United States to share their [many paths and many guides to leadership](#). Juanita Cole (Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at CSU Monterey Bay) will discuss both accidental and intentional career paths and mentorship with Sonja Feist-Price (Provost and Vice-Chancellor, University of Michigan- Flint), Stacy Gleixner (Provost and Vice President, West Valley College) and Ellen Faszewski (Associate Dean for Student Affairs & Clinical Professor, Boston University, Wheelock College of Education).



Sonja Feist-Price
Provost and Vice-Chancellor
University of Michigan-Flint



Stacy Gleixner
Provost and Vice President
West Valley College



Ellen Faszewski,
Associate Dean for Student Affairs
& Clinical Professor
Boston University,
Wheelock College of Education

Connect & Learn: Cultivating a Mentor and Protégé Relationship – Friday, February 4, 2022

The Network will start off the Spring 2022 semester with a mentoring event that will take place on Friday, February 4, 2022. Join us as we discuss the relationship between a mentor and a protégé. Associate Professor Bharti Sharma will moderate a panel of women leaders who will share their professional experience and expertise on the topic.

Save the Date

February 4, 2022

11:30 am – 1:00pm

Join us for a virtual Connect and Learn
“Cultivating a Mentor and Protégé Relationship”

American Council on Education
WOMEN'S NETWORK SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Panelists

Shanlhi Shrinivas, Ph.D.
Interim Dean
Jack H. Brown College of Business and Public Administration
CSU San Bernardino

Olukemi Sawyer, Ph.D.
Associate Vice President, Office of Academic Innovation
Cal Poly Pomona

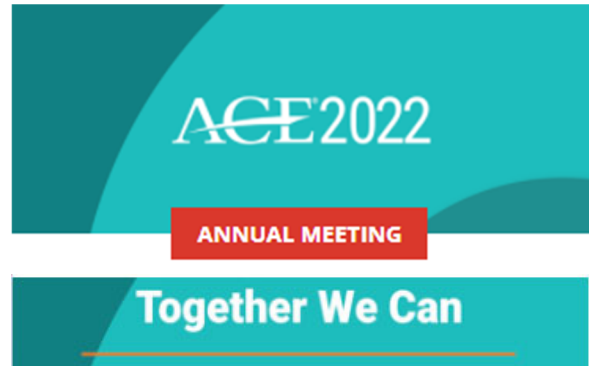
S. Irene Matz, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, College of Communications
CSU Fullerton

Margaret Garcia, Ph.D.
Associate Dean, Office of Undergraduate Studies
CSU Los Angeles

Andrea Villegas
Executive Director of Student Success and Advising
CSU Los Angeles

ACE Annual Meeting in San Diego – March 2022

This year's [ACE Annual Meeting](#) will be held in San Diego between Saturday, March 5, 2022 and Monday, March 7, 2022. All members of the Network are strongly encouraged to attend the 3-day national event and participate in roundtable discussions to learn new strategies for **Empowering Women Leaders in Academia through Professional Networks and Inclusive Leadership**. The roundtable discussion, which will be facilitated by Cal Poly Pomona's Bharti Sharma, ODessa-Elise Downing, Shokoufeh Mirzaei, and Olukemi Sawyerr, will address how the Network is "[Moving the Needle](#)" to increase the number of women leaders in academia. Topics from other workshops and [sessions](#) in the Annual Meeting include:



- Data & Data Analytics
- Degree Attainment & Completion
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Economic Development
- Executive & Presidential Leadership
- Federal Policy & Relations
- Institutional Climate & Culture
- Institutional Innovation
- Internationalization
- Legal Affairs
- Networking & Social Events
- Strategic Planning
- Student Success
- Teaching/Learning/Curriculum

Plenary [speakers](#) for the ACE Annual Meeting include William R. Harvey (President, Hampton University); Paul J. LeBlanc (President, Southern New Hampshire); Ajita Talwalker Menon (President, Calbright College); Scott D. Pulsipher (President, Western Governors University); Eloy Ortiz Oakley (Chancellor, California Community Colleges); and Maria Hinojosa (Journalist, Latino USA).

ACE Women's Network Leadership Conference

The next [ACE Women's Network Leadership Conference](#) will be held during the [ACE Annual Meeting](#). The Women's Leadership Conference theme is **Casting the Net to Strengthen Our Network: Cultivating Strong Coaching, Mentoring, and Sponsoring Skills**. Themed sessions will address:

- Creating and sustaining systems of support (as mentors, coaches, and sponsors) for women leaders across academe
- Finding personal and professional strategies for navigation and perseverance in leadership
- Respecting the intersectionality of our identities as women and diverse leaders

As a special event within the Annual Meeting, the Women's Leadership Conference begins on Saturday, March 5, 2022, at 8:00 AM and ends on Sunday, March 6 at noon. Registration for the Women's Leadership Conference includes a reception and a dinner. Following last year's online event with President Emerita Johnnetta Cole, past participants of the Women's Leadership Conference are looking forward to reconnecting in person for a [toast](#) to women in higher education leadership.



Highlighting Women in Leadership

We continue to be inspired by the amazing women in our Network and enjoy highlighting them along with their success.

Shanthi Srinivas Serves as Interim Dean at Cal State San Bernardino

Shanthi Srinivas, immediate past State Chair for ACE Women's Network of Southern California, accepted a new position this semester. Shanthi now serves as the Interim Dean of Cal State San Bernardino's Jack H. Brown College of Business and Public Administration. Shanthi's previous positions include, Cal Poly Pomona's Presidential Fellow for Leadership Excellence for Institutional Development, faculty member, and department chair. Her professional areas of focus include leadership, employee performance, training and development, and budget management. Shanthi continues to serve the Network as a Planning Committee member and mentor to other women.



Professor Natasha Martin Named ACE Fellow



Each year the American Council on Education hosts its [Fellows Program](#), a national program which provides participants an opportunity to both study and practice leadership. Within its 55 years, the program has served over 2,000 leaders. Last year's ACE Fellow cohort included 38 leaders in higher education who were offered this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. History was made with the cohort which reported a 2 to 1 ratio of women to men. Among these phenomenal women was Natasha Martin. Cal Poly Pomona is the hosting campus for Natasha's fellowship year.

Natasha Martin's home institution is Seattle University, a Jesuit Catholic university where she is a tenured law professor of nearly 20 years and currently serves as the institution's inaugural Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion. When asked about reasons for applying to the program, Natasha shared that "dedicated time for self-reflection and engagement with a cohort of peers around leadership is a rarity in any field including higher education, yet vital for our institutions to adapt and thrive in an ever-changing society. As a premier leadership development program in higher education, the ACE Fellows Program offers an invaluable opportunity to walk alongside seasoned leaders and a cohort of peers across the country as I discern next steps in my professional career." A summer 2019 article in the Chronicle of Higher Education, [What Happens When Women Run Colleges](#), which illuminates barriers to and complexities of women pursuing leadership in academia, caused Natasha to reflect on her own personal and professional goals of the Fellows program. "Through the ACE Fellows Program, I believe that I will increase confidence in my own talent and ability to lead with authenticity. Thus, I hope not only to enhance my leadership skills but also to hone my voice as a woman of color in leadership. I hope to sharpen my leadership capacity including leading with an integrated set of values to inspire and empower others to collaborate, innovate, and grow together."

Natasha expressed her excitement about being placed at Cal Poly Pomona. "It is an incredible honor to learn from President Coley, engage with her team and so many others. I am inspired by President Coley's pathbreaking leadership and passion for access and equity. Learning from her vast experience as an academic leader and former provost presents an exciting opportunity to learn about achieving results for institutional transformation and beyond."

Engaging our Institutional Representatives

The Network covers more than 200 colleges across 10 counties in Southern California. Our goal is to have at least one Institutional Representative (IR) from each college campus by December 2022. If you are interested in joining the current 28 [Institutional Representatives](#) or if you would like to designate one for your campus, please [email](#) our State Chair. Designation as an IR is a great leadership opportunity that allows you to represent your campus and work closely with other women in the region.



Your Feedback Matters

Thank you to all attendees who completed the surveys. Your feedback continues to help the Planning Committee host events that impact our Network's members. Please [email](#) ACE Women's Network if you would like to provide additional feedback about a previous event, share an idea for a program, are interested in co-hosting an event, or would like to contribute to one of the [newsletters](#).

**ACE Women's Network, Southern California
Planning Committee**

Soraya M. Coley

Presidential Sponsor, Cal Poly Pomona

Olukemi Sawyerr

*State Chair, ACE Women's Network, Southern California
AVP, Academic Innovation*

Kimberly Allain

AVP, Employee & Organizational Development and Advancement

Alison Baski

*Dean, College of Science
Interim Dean, College of Engineering*

Sarah Calderon

Administrative Analyst, Registrar's Office

ODessa-Elise Downing

Interim Budget Analyst & Payroll Specialist, University Housing Services

Tari Hunter

Director, Office of Student Life & Cultural Centers

Shokoufeh Mirzaei

Associate Professor, Industrial & Manufacturing Engineer Department

Theresa Navar-Rodriguez

Events Specialist & Commencement Coordinator

Teshia Roby

AVP, Learning & Research Technology

Lucinda Schell

Administrative Operations & Budget Analyst, Office of the President

Bharti Sharma

Associate Professor, Biological Sciences Department

Shanthi Srinivas

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