

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

July 2019 – Present

Program Officer, North America, Policy and Finance

- Manage philanthropic grants related to education finance and policy development, with a two-year budget responsibility of \$5 million
- Serve as the Foundation's primary relationship manager for 19 different partner organizations, which includes revising and analyzing project scope and budgets on work that spans across finance, charter schools, teacher preparation, higher education, and state policy development
- Cross-coordinate with program, government relations, and public engagement and insights teams on policy development related to career readiness pathways, data, finance, policy monitoring, and instructional supports
- Oversee the development of policy landscape analysis that examines how pathways, data, instructional supports, and finance policy are operating in NY, TN, TX, OH, FL, and CA (the Foundation's focus states)
- Created presentation materials and drafted original policy position papers for Foundation co-chairs on federal postsecondary policy strategy and development
- Assisted with the creation of strategy update memos for co-chairs on K12 finance policy
- Facilitated, coordinated, and managed projects related to the preparation and monitoring of grant portfolios tied to pathways, education, and data policy issues
- Co-manage staff committee on racial equity focused on creating a 12-month action plan to better prioritize equity in Foundation operations, grantmaking, and people management

Employees Union, The Center for American Progress

June 2018 – July 2019

President

- Elected to represent 100+ member union and advocate to CAP management for member needs
- Managed organizational budget of CAP employees union, prioritized spending initiatives focused on collective bargaining efforts and unity among employees
- Drafted press statements on CAP union-management relations
- Primary liaison between Union Staff and Management, regularly updated CAP's President, COO, Chief Legal Counsel, and VP of HR on ongoing union issues, grievances, and progress
- Established regular bi-weekly check-ins with CAP COO to review and assist with the implementation of policy or process changes that impacted CAP staff
- Led contract negotiations and collective bargaining process that resulted in progressive three-year contract that (1) included an average raise of 3.1% for all unit members and an average 6.1% salary increase for those employees making the wage minimums within each job tier; (2) provided additional paid personal and sick leave and established a biennial personnel climate survey; and (3) was ratified by the union with the approval of 98% of union members
- Worked with CAP management and managers of all CAP policy teams to create and implement a new work from home policy and assisted managers with the implementation of a pilot program in which staff could engage in schedule work from home bi-weekly on a trial basis before establishing a regular work from home schedule
- Managed [five]-member Union Executive Board and mediated manager-employee conflict and disputes

The Center for American Progress

Senior Research and Advocacy Manager, Postsecondary Education

January 2019 – July 2019

- Served as CAP's primary liaison to Capitol Hill on issues related to higher education, met with each of the democratic congressional offices on the Education & Labor Committee in the House of Representatives, and held regular calls with staffers regarding issues of higher education accountability, affordability, and access
- Coordinated with key stakeholder and advocacy groups on strategy and messaging in an effort to build demand and consensus among members of Congress for higher education accountability
- Led cross-team policy and data analysis project that examined racial equity within college admissions and athletic programs, which resulted in multi-media engagement including op-eds, radio, and podcast placement

- Led efforts to introduce new legislation on student loan servicing and accreditation in the House of Representatives
- Invited by Alabama state legislators to give presentation on state budget issues; presented data on the impacts of state budget decisions on institutional funding and the subsequent impacts on racial equity to democratic members of the Alabama State Legislature at their annual retreat

Policy Analyst, Postsecondary Education

January 2018 – January 2019

- Conducted original policy analysis and research on higher education finance, access, and equity
- Testified before the Department of Education, provided written comment on the importance of the gainful employment and borrower defense rules, and assisted in the push back against regulatory rollback efforts
- Provided Congressional staff with feedback on legislation related to higher education, including the College Equity Act
- Analyzed the President’s budget proposals and its potential impact on federal financial aid, HBCUs, and minority-serving institutions under Title III and V of the Higher Education Act
- Provided feedback and recommendations on questions to pose in budget hearings with Secretary Betsy DeVos to congressional offices in the House Education & Labor Committee
- Spoke on a panel covering how the college scorecard can be utilized for education journalists at an Education Writer’s Association Conference in Los Angeles, California

Higher Education Research Associate, Postsecondary Education

October 2016 – January 2018

- Conducted policy analysis and research on higher education policy proposals from Congress and the new administration, and evaluated potential impacts of new policy proposals on low-income students and students of color
- Met with key stakeholder and advocacy groups on issues related to higher education and tracked policy priorities for each organization
- Maintained a work portfolio with a focus on student loan forgiveness, student loan servicing, and Minority Serving Institutions

The Education Trust

Higher Education Research Analyst

March 2016 – October 2016

- Researched and analyzed data to better define and present socioeconomic and racial patterns in postsecondary educational access, affordability, and success
- Managed the College Results Online project, including updating and verifying the data to be used by consumers

U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (Senator Patty Murray, Ranking Member)

Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Higher Education Fellow

August 2015 – March 2016

- Conducted legislative and policy research on topics including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, TRIO programs, and challenges faced by homeless and foster youth
- Acted as Senator’s sole representative in meetings with key constituent and external stakeholder groups to track and inform policy priorities
- Assisted in the development of talking points for the Senator on issues pertaining to higher education affordability, accountability, and equity
- Developed informational memos for the Senator on topics including caucus priorities in higher education, constituent needs, and federal student aid

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Office of Community College Research and Leadership

Graduate Research Assistant

September 2014 – August 2015

- Managed both practical and statistical analyses of the project data and materials for Credit When It’s Due Project, an initiative to highlight the utility and retention benefits of “reverse transfer” degree programs
- Conducted a literature review on the issue of reverse credit transfer
- Facilitated institutional outreach by interfacing with institutional partners and drafted the project newsletter

University of Texas at San Antonio

Graduate Teaching Assistant

September 2013 – May 2014

- Served as sole instructor for 30+ students in undergraduate experimental psychology lab that covered statistical methods and experiment design
- Developed syllabus, created original assignments and lectures, conducted in-class experiments and analyses, graded and provided feedback on written assignments
- Maintained regular office hours and met with students individually to help bolster their comprehension of

statistical methods, tutor on how to use SPSS statistical software, and provide feedback on written assignments

Roy Maas Youth Alternatives

Residential Specialist

Summer 2012 – September 2013

- Supervised care and recreation of youth residents living in full-time care facility, which primarily served abused youth in need of full-time care
- Provided education support and behavior management of the residents while in school

EDUCATION

Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy

February 2020 – May 2020

Certificate in Education Finance

- Completed program focused on K-12 budgeting and resource deployment within states and school districts

The University of Texas at San Antonio

September 2012 – May 2014

M.S. in Experimental Psychology

Boston University

September 2009 – May 2012

B.A. in Psychology

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

- **Garcia, S. A. & Maxwell, C. (2019)** *Opinion: Zion Williamson is about to join a union. But he should've been in one last year.* [businessinsider.com](https://www.businessinsider.com)
- **Garcia, S. A. (2019)** *The Madness Doesn't End in March.* [americanprogress.org](https://www.americanprogress.org)
- **Maxwell, C. & Garcia, S. A. (2019)** *5 Reasons to Support Affirmative Action in College Admissions.* [americanprogress.org](https://www.americanprogress.org)
- **Garcia, S. A. (2018)** *Gaps in College Spending Shortchange Students of Color.* [americanprogress.org](https://www.americanprogress.org)
- **Garcia, S. A. (2018)** *Four Principles for a Free Community College Program that Works for All.* [americanprogress.org](https://www.americanprogress.org)
- **Garcia, S. A. (2014)** *Influence of Gender on Cultural Orientation and Nutrition Intervention Outcomes.* Graduate Thesis, University of Texas at San Antonio

SKILLS

- Extensive experience in leadership roles, planning, management, organizing, and community outreach
- Well versed in Excel, including using the program to run statistical tests
- Experience with budget management, staff management, and contract negotiations
- Extensive background in research, writing, and quantitative analysis of data, policy, and practices
- Proficient in SPSS and experienced in STATA