

Sara Arce Full Bio

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A daughter of Mexican immigrants, Sara's passion for higher education access was first instilled in her by parents whose dream was to see their daughters go to college and from her own mother who realized her dream of becoming a high school counselor to help students navigate the college-going process. It was after her college experience and completing an internship in the California State Capitol that she became interested in public policy and determined to work advancing state policies that ensure all students can pursue their college dreams.

As the Campaign for College Opportunity's first Senior Vice President of Programs and Strategy, she serves as a member of the Campaign's executive team leading strategic efforts to advance the Campaign's vision of ensuring all Californians can attend, afford, and complete a college education. In this role, she oversees and drives alignment of strategic priorities across the organization ensuring policy impact, actionable research, and effective advocacy strategies. She brings more than a decade of experience in higher education state policy and advocacy to the role and a deep commitment to the Campaign's mission with close to ten years in various leadership roles leading the organization's state policy agenda.

Her previous roles with the Campaign have included as Vice President of Policy and Advocacy where she led and expanded the Campaign's state policy and advocacy agenda, deepened the policy implementation portfolios, and grew an impactful policy team. In this role, she spearheaded the vision and strategy for a coalition of advocates committed to community college equitable placement and completion implementation, subsequent legislation to strengthen the historic policy, and the strategy for a multi-year advocacy effort to strengthen the Associate Degree for Transfer pathway. As Policy Director with the Campaign, she led efforts to create clearer paths and more equitable outcomes for tens of thousands of community college students across the state including helping usher historic legislation to reimagine remedial education at California Community Colleges (AB 705, 2017). Prior to her work with the Campaign, she served as a Legislative Aide to Assemblymember Das Williams (D-Santa Barbara) where her portfolio included K-12 and higher education policy and she served as higher education liaison for the office during his chairmanship of the Assembly Higher Education Committee. In this role, she managed ambitious community college legislation to boost student completion.

Sara's experience also includes working on several political campaigns and fundraising in the non-profit sector. She is an alumnus of the California Education Policy Fellowship Program, Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE) Leadership Institute, University of California Center Sacramento policy program, as well as a graduate of the Leadership Women Pipeline and Rockwood Leadership Institute programs. She holds a B.A. degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara with a double-major in Communications and English.