



### III Conference of the Coalition for Academic Freedom in the Americas

20-21 November 2024

#### Bios of panelists and moderators

**Agustina Benítez:** Is a lawyer graduated from the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, with a specialisation in gender and human rights, and a researcher at the Institute of Legal and Social Research 'Ambrosio L. Gioja' of the Faculty of Law of the University of Buenos Aires. She is a member of the Grupo de Estudios sobre Constitucionalismos Feministas (Feminist Constitutionalism Study Group), which since 2023 has been dedicated to analysing male violence in the university environment.

**Alexander Reyes Guevara:** Is a Nicaraguan psychologist and social researcher currently in exile due to persecution in Nicaragua. He is a senior researcher for the Observatory for National Participation and Advocacy (OPINA). Alexander has worked on national and regional research on education, violence, gender and migration.

**Amanda Mendonça:** Professor at the Faculty of Teacher Training of the State University of Rio de Janeiro, working in the Department of Education and the Postgraduate Programme in Education - Formative Processes and Social Inequalities. Is also an associate researcher at the University of Dundee (Scotland). Pedagogue and sociology graduate, has a PhD in Social Policy, a Master's degree in education, specializes in gender and sexuality and completed two post-doctoral internships in education. Is a member of the Observatory of Secularism in Education and the coordinator of the 'Gender, Sexuality and Difference Research and Study Group'. Coordinates the research project: "Defending the freedoms to learn and teach: an investigation into the systematic persecution of educators in Brazil".

**Anna Cláudia Belli:** Has a law degree and is currently studying for a master's degree at the Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná (PUCPR). She is the coordinator of the Business and Human Rights Relations Laboratory (Lardem) and the International Law and Human Rights Study Centre (NEDIDH), both linked to PUCPR, and an active member of the PUCPR Human Rights Clinic, led by Professor Dr Danielle Anne Pamplona. She is also a researcher at Keele University, where she collaborates with Professor Dr Yossi Nehushtan. She is a member of the Coalition for Academic Freedom in the Americas (CAFA) and the Human Rights International Corner (HRIC). She is a researcher on the accountability of business leaders for human rights violations, with an emphasis on the international context.



**Anna Luisa Walter de Santana:** Professor in the Postgraduate Program (PPGD) at the Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná (PUC-PR). PhD in Law from the Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná (PUC-PR). Capes scholarship for a sandwich doctorate at the Universidad de Los Andes (Colombia). Master in State Law from the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP) (2008). Member of the Executive Board of the Latin American Academy of Human Rights and Business. Visiting researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law and the Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. She works as a consultant on ESG, sustainability and business and human rights.

**Camilla Croso:** Is the Executive Director of the Coalition for Academic Freedom in the Americas. She was previously Director of the Education Program at the Open Society Foundations, General Coordinator of the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education and President of the Global Campaign for Education. She has worked for the promotion of human rights, the right to education and the right to academic freedom for over twenty-five years. Camilla holds an MSc from the London School of Economics in Social Policy and Planning in Developing Countries and is a PhD candidate on education global governance at UNICAMP, Brazil.

**Catherine Newling:** DRL/WHA Office Director, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. Catherine grew up in New Brunswick, New Jersey and received her bachelor's degree in anthropology from Rutgers University. She received her PhD in anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania and did her dissertation fieldwork in Oaxaca, Mexico, on a Fulbright grant. The focus of her research was the involvement of the Mixe, an indigenous ethnic group, in a national movement for indigenous autonomy (recognition of indigenous civil and political rights) within the legal framework of the Mexican constitution and nation state. She came to the State Department in 2004 as an American Association for the Advancement of Science Fellow, working in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor on Latin American issues. In 2006 she joined the State Department permanently and is now the Director of the Office of Western Hemisphere Affairs in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

**Clare Robinson:** Advocacy Director at Scholars at Risk, where she leads SAR's efforts to identify, report on, and respond to attacks on higher education communities worldwide. Ms. Robinson developed and oversees the organization's Student Advocacy Seminars, faculty-led teams of students conducting advocacy on behalf of imprisoned scholars and students via the Scholars in Prison Project; and is responsible for research and advocacy around country-focused concerns relating to academic freedom. She holds an MA in Politics/International Relations from New York University, where she was founding editor of the NYU Department of Politics' Journal



of Political Inquiry. She was previously Public Information Officer in the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and is an active alumni of UCLA.

**Danielle Anne Pamplona:** Is a Brazilian researcher on the issue of Business and Human Rights, full Professor of the Graduate Program of the Law School at Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná – PUCPR; Postdoctoral at the American University (Washington, DC); Visiting Researcher at the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights (Oxford) and the Max Planck Institute of Compared Public Law and International Law (Heidelberg); Director of the Human Rights Clinic at PUCPR; Co-President of the Global Business and Human Rights Scholars Association; Consultant for Business, Human Rights and Sustainability.

**Elizabeth Hutchison:** Is Professor of Latin American History and a DEI Academic Leadership Faculty Fellow at The University of New Mexico. Active since 2013 as a leader in UNM faculty governance, Dr. Hutchison now serves as a UNM representative to the Action Collaborative for Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education. She has published work on faculty engagement in preventing sexual violence, Title IX mandatory reporting policies, and anti-retaliation interventions in academia, and also advises academic leaders in the US and Chile on initiatives to prevent and remediate sexual misconduct in their institutions.

**Elthon Rivera Cruz:** President and co-founder of Asociación Iniciativa Puentes por los Estudiantes de Nicaragua (Ipen), activist for academic freedom, the right to education and the rights of young people. Studies in Medicine and Political Science. He also works on issues of nonviolent action and peace building. Political exile since 2022.

**Esteban Alejandro Oyarzun Gomez.** Has a degree in Law and Social Sciences from Universidad Austral de Chile. Co-director of the Círculo de Estudios de Derecho Internacional de los Derechos Humanos (CEDIDH). Legal advisor to the judge of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Patricia Pérez Goldberg.

**Eve Darian-Smith:** Professor and Chair in the Department of Global Studies & International Studies at the University of California, Irvine. I am an award-winning scholar and teacher, trained in law, history and anthropology and interested in issues of decoloniality, human rights, legal pluralism, and rising authoritarianism. I have published widely including 13 books and edited volumes. I am a fellow at the Center for the Defense of Academic Freedom (AAUP), and my new book is *Policing Higher Education: The Antidemocratic Attack on Higher Education and Why It Matters* (2025, Johns Hopkins UP). Link to full online bio: <https://faculty.sites.uci.edu/edarian/>

**Fabián Salvioli:** PhD. in Juridical Sciences, directs the Institute and the Master's Degree in Human Rights, and serves as Professor at the National University of La



Plata, Argentina. At the United Nations, he was a member (2009-2016) and chair (2015-2016) of the Human Rights Committee and was the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-repetition (2018-2024).

**Farida Shaheed:** From Pakistan, was appointed Special Rapporteur on the right to education in 2022. She is the Executive Director of Pakistan's leading gender justice organization, Shirkat Gah - Women's Resource Centre. She is also an independent expert/consultant to numerous U.N., international and bi-lateral development agencies, the government of Pakistan, as well as civil society initiatives, and serves on multiple international and national advisory committees. She served as a member of Pakistan's National Commission on the Status of Women, and as the first Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights from 2009 to 2015.

**Guadalupe Yapud:** Ph.D. in Sociology from Flacso-Ecuador, was a visiting scholar at the Institute for Feminist and Gender Studies at the University of Ottawa, and is currently a visiting professor in the Sociology and Gender Program at Flacso-Ecuador, in the Chair of Migration, Refuge and Human Rights. She coordinates research on migrant women's narratives in Ecuador through an agreement between Flacso-Ecuador and Barómetro of Colombia. She is affiliated with the Lebanese Studies Network at the University of Cambridge, where she presented her research proposal on the sense of belonging of refugee teachers from the Global South in Canada.

**Holaya Peña Durán:** Is a chemical engineer and researcher in social sciences at the Human Rights Observatory of the Universidad de Los Andes (ULA), coordinator of the Women's Commission of the ULA and coordinator of the General Commission Against Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination of the ULA. She is also an activist for human and gender rights. As coordinator of various commissions at the Universidad de Los Andes, she leads research and actions to prevent and eradicate gender-based violence and discrimination. With solid experience in human rights, she has provided training to various actors in civil society and the State, promoting equality and justice. Her work has focused on research, documentation and psychosocial support to victims, as well as advocacy in international human rights protection systems.

**Isaac Nahón-Serfaty:** Is a scholar, writer and consultant, with extensive experience in health communication, crisis management, and media studies. He is interested in studying the role of images and emotions in shaping public perceptions about major political, environmental and social issues. His book *Strategic Communication and Deformative Transparency. Persuasion in politics, propaganda and public health* (Routledge, 2019) explores the representations of the grotesque in public health, politics and terrorism. He is currently studying the role of the visually kitsch and grotesque in environmental and "animalist" communication through a "digital machine"



to analyze emotions about nature and non-human animals on social media. He has been studying the challenges to academic freedom in the Americas in recent years. His platform [CéC](#) is dedicated to discuss and document these challenges. He is Professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Ottawa (Canada).

**Jack Mayerhofer:** Is the Senior Program Officer for Global Coalitions working on the Advocacy team at Scholars at Risk. In this role, Jack coordinates with regional coalitions of academics and human rights practitioners for advancing the protection and promotion of academic freedom around the world including in Africa, the Americas, and Southeast Asia. Prior to joining SAR, Jack was Deputy Executive Director at the Auschwitz Institute for the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities where he worked with government and civil society partners to strengthen human rights policymaking, particularly in Africa, Europe, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. Jack earned a Masters of Science in Global Affairs from Rutgers University and a Bachelors of Science in French and Applied Linguistics from Penn State University. Jack's research interests include the analysis of anti-democratic efforts, such as attacks on academic freedom, and their relationship to the risk of political violence.

**Jesse Levine:** Is Senior Advocacy Officer at Scholars at Risk. Mr. Levine manages the work of SAR's Academic Freedom Advocacy Team initiative, including the development of research and advocacy projects focusing on discrete academic freedom concerns. He is an experienced U.S. litigator and has a wide range of human rights experience including, most recently, as associate counsel at Human Rights Watch. He holds a JD from Fordham University Law School and a BA from University of Michigan.

**Joao Velloso**, is Associate Professor at the [Faculty of Law](#) of the University of Ottawa (Canada), is Vice-Dean [Graduate Studies in Law](#) and member of the member of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre ([HRREC](#)) of the uOttawa. Prof. Velloso works in the areas of criminal law and sentencing law, immigration law, and socio-legal studies with a focus on the judicialization of social problems and the governance of security through the intersections between criminal law and administrative law. His research deals with the penalization of protesters and migrants, de-liberalization of rights, carceral transparency, harm reduction and drug policy, and on academic freedom in the Americas. He is the founding chair of the WG "Judicialization of Social Problems" of the *Research Committee on Sociology of Law* ([RCSL / ISA](#)), Vice-President Conference of the *Canadian Law & Society Association* ([CLSA-ACDS](#)), and member of the *Coalition for Academic Freedom in the Americas* ([CAFA](#)).

**Karina Batthyány:** She is Executive Director of the Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO). PhD in Sociology and is a Professor in the Department of Sociology of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Universidad de la República (Uruguay).



She is currently a member of the Governing Board of the ISC (International Science Council), member of the National Research System of Uruguay, full member of the Academia Nacional de Ciencias del Uruguay ( ANCIU) and member of the Immanuel Wallerstein Chair of the Institut für Sozialforschung, Frankfurt am Main and the Center for Advanced Studies of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the National University of Cordoba (IfS-UNC). She is the author of numerous publications on social welfare, gender, public policies, unpaid work and care. Among her publications are the books *Miradas latinoamericanas a los cuidados*, *Políticas del cuidado* and *Hablemos de Desigualdad*.

**Kait Spear:** Is a Program Officer with the Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education, which is a membership-based collective housed within and administered by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Before joining the National Academies in 2022, Spear was a Senior Research Associate at NORC at the University of Chicago, where she engaged in many interpersonal violence (IPV)-related, policy-oriented projects. Spear received her Master in Public Policy from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, along with two certificates in Health Disparities and Health Inequality, and Population Health. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Medicine, Health, and Society; Psychology; and Women’s and Gender Studies from Vanderbilt University.

**Libby Harranty:** Is the former president of the New College of Florida student Senate forced out of the institution for their fierce protesting of the right-wing takeover of the university by Governor Ron DeSantis. They are completing their undergraduate degree at Hampshire College, amongst an exiled population of around 80 New College students. They continue to, in Massachusetts, organize students and faculty around issues of academic freedom, and raise awareness for violations of freedom occurring in the state of Florida every day. They represent the transfer student population on the Hampshire College Student Advocacy Board, and lead a student group called Hampshire Democratic Action, mobilizing student activists in support of progressive electoral efforts in at-risk states.

**Liliana Patricia Lopez Forero:** Researcher at the Simón Bolívar University, Barranquilla, Colombia. Consultant in Human Rights; Communication and Culture; Gender and Sexuality. Doctorate in Social and Human Sciences. Master in Social Development and Social Sciences. Specialist in political-economic studies. Social communicator and journalist. In the path of activism from academia and civil society organizations for the defense of a life without violence against women, peace and sexual and reproductive rights.



**Madeline Rowe:** Is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, studying higher education. Her research interests include academic freedom, higher education policy, and free speech on college campuses. Madeline also holds a master's degree in educational leadership and policy analysis from the University of Wisconsin - Madison.

**Maria Estela Rivero Fuentes (Estela Rivero):** Is a Senior Researcher with the Pulte Institute for Global Development at the University of Notre Dame, co-director of the Central America Research Alliance (CARA), a network of more than two dozen research and civil society organizations that are interested in the implementation of research in policy-making. Estela holds a Ph.D. in Demography and Public Policy from Princeton University, and has over 20 years of experience evaluating social programs; analyzing and collecting data; and conducting research on gender, migration, youth and violence issues in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. Her interest in academic freedom derives from the belief that for research to be impactful, it is necessary to have an environment that guarantees researchers' right to conduct and disseminate research and for the population to access it.

**Mayda Hočevár González:** Law Degree from the University of Los Andes, Venezuela and Doctorate in Law from the University of Salamanca, Spain. Professor of Philosophy of Law at the Faculty of Legal and Political Sciences and founding director of the Human Rights Observatory of the Universidad de Los Andes, an organization that has been documenting the situation of academic freedom in Venezuela since 2014. Her publications include "Threats to Academic Freedom in Venezuela: Legislative Impositions and Patterns of Discrimination Against University Teachers and Students." *Interdisciplinary Political Studies*, vol. 3 N. 1 (2017); *Libertad Académica y Derechos Humanos* in *Cuadernos de Derechos Humanos* (2021), and *Auge y declive de las universidades en Venezuela. ¿Cómo debería modelarse un sistema universitario post-chavista?* (2022) *Revista UDEM*.

**Miguel Barboza:** Is currently a Project Coordinator and Senior Researcher in the Rule of Law Program for Latin America, based in Bogotá, Colombia. He's responsible for projects on business and human rights, indigenous peoples, and the Inter-American Human Rights System. He's also the South America representative for the Business and Human Rights Resource Center in London. He's a Peruvian lawyer and holds a Master's degree in International Human Rights Law (LL.M.) from the University of Notre Dame in the United States (Magna Cum Laude). He has been a visiting researcher at the Center for Law, Justice and Society (Dejusticia) in Colombia, a lawyer at the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), and a senior human rights lawyer at EarthRights International. He is also currently a professor at the Universidad del Rosario, Universidad del Magdalena and Universidad Surcolombiana in their respective law schools.



**Rafael Ibarra Garza:** He's an undergraduate, master's and doctoral professor, author and national and international speaker, mainly on research methodology, trust and foundation law. All this has allowed him to consolidate his position as a researcher of the National System of Researchers of CONAHCYT. Since 2016, he has worked at the University of Monterrey in different positions, and highlights having been part of the agile team that implemented processes to change all face-to-face classes to online during the pandemic. He is currently the director of the Academic Department of Law at the University of Monterrey.

**Ramona Hernández:** Professor of Sociology at the City College of New York, City University of New York (CUNY) and Director of the CUNY Dominican Studies Institute, also affiliated with the Doctoral faculties of the Department of Sociology and the Master of International Studies at the CUNY Graduate Center. She is the author, co-author and co-editor of numerous writings, including books, book chapters and academic journal articles. She is a renowned public speaker and has received numerous awards and recognitions for her scholarly research. Under her leadership, CUNY DSI has established itself as a world-class institute of research known for producing pioneering and transformative knowledge about the Dominican people in the U.S.

**Renata Aquino:** A history teacher, Masters in History Teaching and Historiography (PPGHS/UERJ), PhD candidate in Education at the Faculty of Education of the USP. Her research focuses on freedom in education, the new right, the digitalisation of politics and negationism. She is a member of the collective Teachers against the School without a Party and is currently a researcher at the National Observatory on Violence against Educators (UFF).

**Ricardo Villalobos Fontalvo:** Holds a Cum Laude law degree from Rafael Urdaneta University (Venezuela) and an LLM in International Human Rights Law from the University of Essex. He currently serves on the board and leads the Research and International Advocacy Department at Aula Abierta, an NGO with consultative status before the UN ECOSOC that promotes academic freedom in Latin America. He has taught Human Rights Law at Rafael Urdaneta University and conducted research for the Human Rights Commission at the University of Zulia. He has also participated in the Human Rights Clinic at the University of Essex and contributed to research projects within its School of Law. Ricardo is both author and co-author of several publications on academic freedom within international human rights law and the challenges faced by the academic community.

**Salvador Herencia-Carrasco:** Part-time professor of the Faculty of Law, Section de Droit Civil and member of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre, University of Ottawa. Legal counsel for the Coalition of Academic Freedom in the Americas. His research focuses on International Law, the Inter-American Human





Rights System, Constitutional law, business and human rights and academic freedom. Member of the board of editors of *Agenda Estado de Derecho* and *Afronomicslaw*. Member of CAFA's scientific committee. Foreign legal adviser to Colombia's Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

**Terri Frasca, Ph.D:** Is a Program Officer with the Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Her graduate research examined the experiences of marginalized employees in the workplace, as well as perceptions of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. She received her Ph.D. and M.S. in Psychology and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies from the Pennsylvania State University and her B.S. in Psychology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

**Tracy Kijewski-Correa:** Is the William J. Pulte Director of the Pulte Institute for Global Development at the University of Notre Dame's Keough School of Global Affairs, where she also serves as the Academic Director of the Integration Lab (i-Lab). As a professor of Civil Engineering and Global Affairs, her research seeks to enhance the resilience and sustainability of hazard-exposed communities, with particular emphasis on climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction. She currently serves as the inaugural director of the Structural Extreme Event Reconnaissance (StEER) network mobilizing networks of engineers to assess disaster impacts globally.

**Viviana Fernandez:** Is the Associate Director at the Human Rights Research and Education Centre, University of Ottawa (uOttawa). She is currently a member of the Executive Board of the [Association of Human Rights Institutes](#) (AHRI) and sits in the Management Committee of the [Interdisciplinary Research Laboratory on the Rights of the Child](#) (uOttawa) since 2014 and the Committee for the [Joint Chair in Women's Studies](#), Carleton University and uOttawa since 2019. In addition, Viviana was elected to the [Scholars at Risk \(SAR\)](#) Canada Steering Committee from 2016 until 2022 (Chair in 2020-2022) and has been a member of SAR's International Advisory Committee since 2016. Viviana also led the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign for Canada as a board member of [Women in International Security Canada](#) from 2015 until 2018. Prior to taking up her position at the Human Rights Research and Education Centre, Viviana joined uOttawa in 2004 as the Head of the Research Office at the Telfer School of Management.