

# ISHARA CASELLAS CONNORS

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<b>CONTACT INFORMATION</b>	Texas A&M Bush School of Government and Public Service lcaseallasconnors@tamu.edu
<b>ACADEMIC &amp; RESEARCH APPOINTMENTS</b>	Texas A&M University <i>Assistant Professor (2021 - present)</i> Bush School of Government and Public Service Department of Public Service & Administration Affiliated Faculty, Latino/a and Mexican American Studies & Africana Studies
<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>Boston College, Lynch School of Education</b> Ph.D. Higher Education  <b>Columbia University, Teachers College</b> M.A. Higher and Postsecondary Education  <b>Clark University</b> B.A Business Management
<b>PUBLISHED PAPERS</b>	<b>Casellas Connors, I.,</b> Unangst., L., Evans, K. (in-press). Navigating the Tension: US Refugee Resettlement Agency Support of Postsecondary Access. Resubmitted September 2024. <i>Journal of Refugee Studies</i> .  <b>Casellas Connors, I.,</b> Evans, K., Unangst, L., Chunga-Pizarro, S. (in-press). Reframing Higher Education for Refugees: Pathways, Policies, and Community Cultural Wealth. <i>Journal of Higher Education</i>  <b>Casellas Connors, I. &amp; Feik, H.</b> (2025). Communicating Social Justice in the Public Sphere: The Case of Public Higher Education. Resubmitted September 2024. <i>Public Management Review</i> .  <b>Casellas Connors, I.</b> (2024). Disrupting the Narrative: Afro-Latin Americans Across U.S. Higher Education. Higher Education: Theory of Handbook and Research.  <b>Casellas Connors, I. &amp; Gonlin, V.</b> (2024). Complicating Latiné experiences: Afro-Latiné students' perceptions of campus climate and sense of belonging. <i>Journal of Diversity in Higher Education</i> . Advance online publication. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000580">https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000580</a>  <b>Casellas Connors, I.</b> Unangst, L., Barone, N. (2024). Supporting displaced students: A Comparative Analysis of Institutional Supports. <i>Race Ethnicity Education</i> . <a href="http://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2023.2192947">http://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2023.2192947</a>  <b>Casellas Connors, I.</b> (2023). Racial Diversity in the Geosciences: Engaging Community Cultural Wealth for Success. 29 (2). <i>Journal of Women and Minorities in Science and Engineering</i> . <a href="http://doi.org/10.1615/JWomenMinorScienEng.2022037861">http://doi.org/10.1615/JWomenMinorScienEng.2022037861</a>

**Casellas Connors, I.** (2022). Examining racial discourse in equity reports: Florida's public Hispanic serving institutions. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 30, (29). <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.30.5955>

Unangst, L., **Casellas Connors, I.**, & Barone, N. (2022). State-Based Policy Supports for Refugee, Asylee, and TPS-Background Students in US Higher Education. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, 38(1), 95–110. <https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.40819>

**Casellas Connors, I.**, & McCoy, H. (2022). Performing Anti-racism: Universities Respond to Anti-Black Violence. *Race and Justice*, 12(3), 588–613. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21533687221101787>

Unangst, L., Borg, N., **Casellas Connors, I.**, & Barone, N. (2022). Diversities at US colleges and universities: Online diversity statements at institutions employing chief diversity officers. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Leadership Studies*, 3(3), 16–36. <https://dx.doi.org/10.52547/johepal.3.3.16>

**Casellas Connors, I.** (2021). Constructing a monolith: State policy, institutional DEI plans, and the flattening of Latinx identity at Hispanic-serving institutions. *AERA Open*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584211063872>

Arnold, K. D., & **Casellas Connors, I.** (2021). The 'anti-Instagram': Using visual methods to study the college experiences of underrepresented students. *Visual Studies*, 1-19. <https://10.1080/1472586X.2021.1893612>

**POLICY BRIEFS,  
REPORTS &  
NEWS**

**Casellas Connors, I.**, Evans, K., Unangst, L. (2023). *Access to Higher Education: The Maryland, District of Columbia, and Virginia Area*. Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area.

Unangst, L., **Casellas Connors, I.**, Evans, K. (2023). *Humanizing Internationalization in the Context of Permanent Displacement*. NAFSA.

**Casellas Connors, I.**, Taylor, L., (2023). *COVID and Community Colleges*. Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Taylor, L., **Casellas Connors, I.**, (2023). *Dual Credit and Community Colleges*. Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Thomas, N., Bergom, I., **Casellas Connors, I.**, Gautam, P., Gismondi, A., & Roshko, A. (2017). *Democracy counts: A report on U.S. college and university student voting*. Institute for Democracy & Higher Education, Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life, Tufts University.

Thomas, N. and Casellas Connors, I. (2017). *More, and more diverse, US college students voted in 2016*. The Conversation.

Thomas, N. and **Casellas Connors, I.** (2016). *Talking politics: A campus conversations guide about your campus voting*. Institute for Democracy & Higher Education, Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life, Tufts University

## GRANTS & CONTRACTS

2024 Serra, D., **Casellas Connors, I.**, Cortes, K., Curruthers, C. (Co-PIs). Unlocking Opportunities: Facilitating Student Transfers from Two-to Four-Year College Through Coaching. *J-PAL*, \$268,989

2023 Guneralp, I (PI), Wiedherwohl, C. (PI). **Casellas Connors, I. (Co-I)**. Gulf Scholars Research Program. TAMU ENGAGE Gulf Scholars Program: Next Generation of Advocates for the Gulf Ecosystem. National Academy of Science. \$624,997

2022 **Casellas Connors, I.** (PI), Unangst, L. Evans, K. (Co-PIs). Cultivating Refugee Access to Higher Education Across Maryland, District of Columbia, and Virginia. *W.T. Grant Foundation* \$49,992.

2022 Evans, K (PI), **Casellas Connors, I.**, Unangst, L. (Co-PIs). Access to Higher Education for Refugees in the MD/VA/DC area. *University of Maryland, Office of Translational Research*. \$35,000.

2022 **Casellas Connors, I.** (PI), Wanzer Serrano, D. Discourse Tracing of Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions in the University of Texas System. *Race and Ethnic Studies Institute, Texas A&M University*. \$9,960.

2021 Taylor, L.L.(PI), **Casellas Connors, I.** (Co-PI). Examining shifting enrollment across Texas community colleges: Administrative perspective navigating enrollment declines. *Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board*. \$480,000 (\$12,000 for Co-PI).

2019 Casellas Connors, I. (PI). Experiences of Racially Minoritized Students in the Geosciences. *Texas A&M University Diversity Seed Grant Funding*. \$2,000

2019 Casellas Connors, I. (Lead Staff). Thriving in the Geosciences: An Integrated Approach to Supporting First-Year Students. *Halliburton Foundation*. \$35,000

2018 Casellas Connors, I. Graduate Student Support. Boston College. \$500

## CONFERENCES PRESENTATIONS

**Casellas Connors, I.** & Chunga-Pizarro, S. (Upcoming). Breaking Boundaries: Unveiling Racialized Administrative Burdens in Refugee Resettlement. *APPAM*. Washington, DC.

**Casellas Connors, I.**, Daché, A., Feik, H., Juarez, D., Sun, J. (2024 April). Un pirámide: U.S. Afro-Latin American Cities and Student Campus Contexts in Florida's Public Higher Education. *American Educational Research Association*. Philadelphia, PA.

Daché, A., **Casellas Connors, I.**, Sun, J (2024 April). Beyond Blackness. *American Educational Research Association*. Philadelphia, PA.

- Casellas Connors, I.,** Evans, K., Unangst, L., Chunga-Pizarro, S. (2024 April). Reframing Higher Education for Refugees: Pathways, Policies, and Community Cultural Wealth. *American Educational Research Association*. Philadelphia, PA.
- Wanzer-Serano, D., **Casellas Connors, I.,** Rodriguez, M.(2024 April). State Systems and Advancement of Servingness at Emerging Hispanic Serving Institutions. *American Educational Research Association*. Philadelphia, PA.
- Martinez-Benyarko, M. **Casellas Connors, I.** Garcia-Louis, C., Hayward, J. Munoz, N. (2023, November). Putting the 'Afro' in Latinidad: Interactive Symposium on the Past, Present, and Future of AfroLatine/a/o Scholarship. *2022 Association for the Study of Higher Education, Presidential Session*. Minneapolis, MN
- Evans, K., Unangst, L., **Casellas Connors, I.,** Khpalwak, R. (2023, October). Community Advisory Board's Identification of Barriers to Accessing Higher Education for Recent Refugee Arrivals . *Council on Social Work Education*. Atlanta, GA.
- Unangst, L., **Casellas Connors, I** (2022, November). Refugee resettlement agency and Community Service Organization support of higher education access in the US. *2022 Association for the Study of Higher Education, Presidential Session*. Las Vegas, NV.
- Casellas Connors, I.,** Wanzer-Serrano, D., Rodriguez, M. (2022, November). Discourse Tracing of Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions in the University of Texas System. *2022. Association for the Study of Higher Education*. Las Vegas, NV
- Casellas Connors, I.,** Unangst, L., Barone, N. (2021, October). Institutional supports for displaced students in Houston and Sacramento: A critical, comparative analysis. [Paper Presentation]. *2021 Association for the Study of Higher Education*. Virtual.
- Casellas Connors, I.** (2021, April). AfroLatinx Students?: A state snapshot considering Latinx. [Paper Presentation]. *2021 American Educational Research Association*. Virtual.
- Casellas Connors, I.** (2021, March) Advancing Racial Equity through HSI Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plans. [Paper Presentation]. *2021 Association for Education Finance and Policy*. Virtual.
- Unangst, L., **Casellas Connors, I.,** Barone, N.(2021, February) State based refugee higher education policy in comparative context: A critical policy analysis. [Paper Presentation]. *2021 Comparative and International Education Society*
- Rosenman, E.\*, **Casellas Connors, I.,** Pollard, J., & Loomis, J. (2020, November) Uneven geographies of financial vulnerability in US higher education. [Presentation] *Regional Inequality in Europe and the US*. Virtual. \*presenting author
- Casellas Connors, I.** (2020, April). Examining Racial Discourse in Equity Reports: Florida's Public Hispanic Serving. [Round Table Presentation] *2020 American Educational Research Association*, Virtual.

**Casellas Connors, I.** (2018, November). The limitations of diversity policy: Critical discourse analysis of SUNY Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy. [Paper Presentation]. *2018 Association for the Study of Higher Education*, Tampa FL.

Arnold, A., **Casellas Connors, I.** (2017, November). The anti-Instagram: Using visual methods to study the college experiences of underrepresented students. [Paper Presentation] *2017 Association for the Study of Higher Education*, Houston TX.

Nespoli, L., **Casellas Connors, I.** (2011m February). Community college big ideas: Identifying the best and boldest ideas to promote sustainability, maintain or improve quality, and, most significantly, improve student success. *2011 American Association of Community Colleges*. New Orleans, LA.

**SERVICE AND  
LEADERSHIP**

2023 - present Editorial Member, Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis

2022-2023 Program Committee, Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE)

2022-2023 Journal Reviewer: Teachers College Record, Race Ethnicity & Education, Urban Education