

# PROPEL AI SYMPOSIUM

Promoting Regional Opportunities for  
Prosperity and Education Leadership with AI

**February 21, 2025**

**8:30 AM - 4:30 PM**

**Santos Manuel Student Union**

**North Conference Center**



  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
SAN BERNARDINO



# WELCOME

Welcome to the PROPEL AI Symposium at California State University, San Bernardino. It is an honor to host this important gathering, where leaders from higher education, industry and the workforce come together to explore the transformative impact of artificial intelligence or AI.

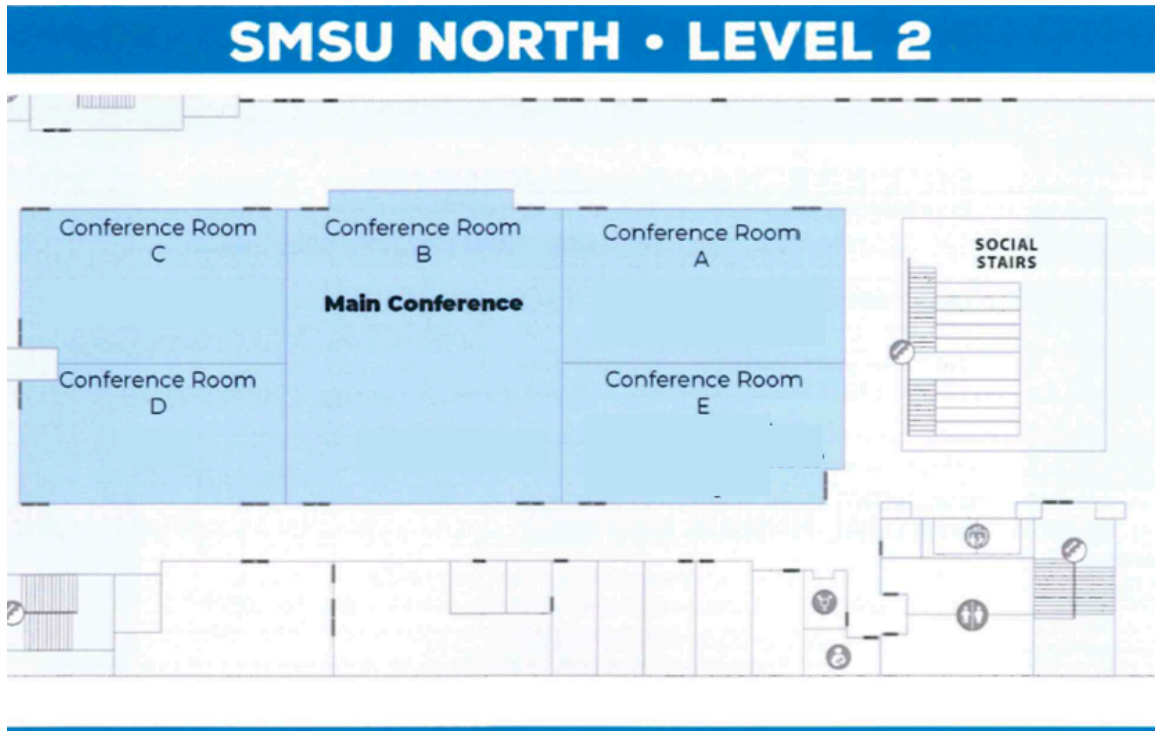
AI is reshaping the future of education and work, and, as a forward-thinking institution, CSUSB is committed to preparing our students and communities for the opportunities and challenges ahead. Through insightful keynotes, engaging panel discussions and collaborative sessions, today's symposium will foster critical conversations on how AI can drive innovation, equity and workforce readiness.

I encourage you to take full advantage of this opportunity to connect with experts, exchange ideas and contribute to shaping an AI-powered future that benefits all. Thank you for joining us, and I look forward to a productive and inspiring day.

Dr. Tomás D. Morales  
President  
California State University, San Bernardino



# SMSU NORTH MAP



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# AGENDA

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21

8:30AM

Check-In / Breakfast

SMSU North Conference Center

9:00 AM

Welcome & Opening Remarks

Conference Room B



*Dr. Tomás D. Morales, President, CSUSB*



*Dr. Samuel Sudhakar, Vice President & CFO, CSUSB (Event Co-Chair)*



*Dr. Ashish Vaidya, CEO & President, Growing Inland Achievement (Event Co-Chair)*

9:15 AM

OPENING KEYNOTE:

Conference Room B



**Dr. Ajey Jacob | Information Sciences Institute**

*Dr. Jacob is the Director of the Application Specific Intelligent Computing (ASIC) Lab, a hardware research group at the University of Southern California's Information Sciences Institute (ISI). He brings 16 years of industry research, development, and manufacturing experience from Intel Corporation and GlobalFoundries (GF) to ISI. His primarily focuses on materials, devices, integration, and fabrication aspects of the advanced and differentiating technology research.*

10:10 AM

BREAK

10:15 AM

CEO Roundtable Discussion:

Conference Room B



**Dr. Ashish Vaidya (Moderator)**  
Growing Inland Achievement



**Dr. Tomás D. Morales, President**  
CSU, San Bernardino



**Dr. Edwin Gomez, Superintendent**  
Riverside County



**Kimberly Starrs,**  
CEO of Inland SoCal United Way



**Kelly May-Vollmar, Superintendent**  
Desert Sands Unified School District



**Waheed Baqai,**  
Former COO of Wise Healthcare  
Founder of Healthcare AI Start-up

11:05 AM

BREAK

# AGENDA

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21

11:15 AM

### Plenary Sessions:

#### HIGHER EDUCATION FOCUS

Conference Room A/E



Roger Kohler | Director of AI Solutions and Architecture | Arizona State University

*A member of ASU's AI Acceleration team, he plays a key role in advancing AI-driven innovation across the university. He has been instrumental in developing AI-powered solutions, including an AI Feedback tool for written assignments and several course-specific AI tutors. Roger also contributes to ASU's foundational AI platform, CreateAI. Additionally, he collaborates with vendors to identify and implement the cutting-edge AI solutions for ASU's teaching and learning teams. With 15 years of experience as a software engineer and consultant, Roger has designed and built scalable enterprise systems for higher education, government, insurance, and startups. His expertise spans AI architecture, enterprise solutions, and the strategic adoption of AI in academia.*

#### K-12 FOCUS

Conference Room C/D



Dr. Sonal Patel | Program Manager for Digital Learning & Computer Science Education  
San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools

*Along with her team, she works to facilitate the design, development, and implementation of equitable educational technology, artificial intelligence, and computer science programs. In 2023, Dr. Patel completed her doctorate in Leadership for Educational Justice at the University of Redlands, researching the collective impact approach to broadening computer science access, participation, and experience of K- 12 students. Prior to being at the county, Dr. Patel was a classroom teacher, instructional coach, and district administrator.*



David Thurston | Assistant Superintendent of Technology & Information Services  
San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools

*In his role, he oversees Technical Services, Technology JPA, and the Digital Learning Services departments. David's team serves over 40 school districts and three county offices of education, supporting the educational and operations efforts of staff serving more than 400,000 students. He has 28 years of experience in K12 IT technical and EdTech leadership in California. He is a California IT in Education (CITE) Certified Chief Technology Officer (CCTO). He is the current president of the CITE board of directors and a significant contributor to CITE's AI and cybersecurity content.*

12:15 PM

### LUNCH

Conference Room B

### Keynote Speaker:



Dr. Sabba Quidwai | CEO, Designing Schools

*Author, educator, and entrepreneur Dr. Sabba Quidwai believes that cultures of innovation begin with a culture of empathy. In an AI-powered world, she helps organizations build trust, encourage creativity, and inspire a collective vision through her role as CEO of Designing Schools. This work reflects her conviction that learning is a lifelong journey, extending from classrooms to the dynamic landscapes of the modern world.*

# AGENDA

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21

1:30 PM -  
2:15 PM

### CONCURRENT SESSIONS



Dr. Nabeel Alzahrani, CSUSB

**Introduction to Artificial Intelligence (AI) for All**

Conference Room A



Tania Pantoja, CSUSB,  
Amy Walling, SDSU,  
Sam Camarena, CSU Office of the Chancellor, and  
Emilio Pantoja, Riverside County District Attorney Office

Conference Room B



**The Brave New World: How will Artificial Intelligence  
Impact Philanthropy?**



Leslie Valmonte, Chaffey College  
**AI-Powered Growth: Mastering Critical  
Thinking for Employability**

Conference Room C



Dr. Karina Augustus & Guadalupe Saldivar, UCR  
**Perspectives on the Impact of AI in Education &  
Workforce Development - Panel Discussion**

Conference Room D



David Culberhouse, SBCSS  
**Preparing Our Students for  
a Non-Obvious Future**

Conference Room E

2:15 PM

BREAK

2:25 PM -  
3:05 PM

### CONCURRENT SESSIONS



Dr. Vincent Nestler, CSUSB  
**Democratizing AI: Understanding and  
Implementing Local Language Models for  
Education and Research**

Conference Room A



Dr. Heidi Baynes & Dr. Jeff Oldfield, RCOE  
**Transforming Education with AI:  
From Passive Consumption to Active Creation**

Conference Room B



Dr. Yunfei Hou, CSUSB  
**FAMSearch: AI-Assisted Natural Language  
Search for University Policies**

Conference Room C



Dr. Fadi Muheidat, CSUSB  
**AI in Education: Bridging Gaps and Building  
Future-Ready Careers**

Conference Room D



Dr. Sabba Quidwai, Designing Schools  
**Showcase Your Skills: Portfolios for LinkedIn  
and Lifelong Learning**

Conference Room E

3:05 PM

BREAK

3:15 PM

CLOSING KEYNOTE:

Conference Room B



Dr. Karen Vignare | Vice President, Digital Transformation for Student Success,  
The Association of Public & Land-grant Universities

*Dr. Vignare is a strategic innovator dedicated to leveraging emerging technologies to improve student success in higher education. As the Vice President of Digital Transformation for Student Success at the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, Karen works with a national network of public research universities committed to using innovative technology and change management to improve academic systems' efficiency through reduction of barriers, improve teaching and learning and support students. At APLU, she is focused on how to scale and sustain effective change.*

4:30 PM

End of Event

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