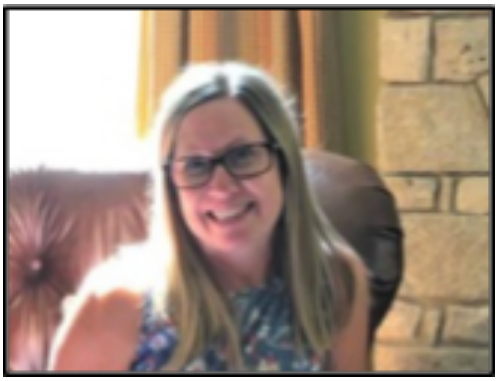
Meet the Leadership Team of The Fellows at The Center

Karina Alonso has been an educator for 6 years. Currently, she an ESL Resource Specialist at Sator Sanchez Elementary School in Joliet, Illinois. Karina completed her undergraduate degree at the University of St. Francis, and her graduate degree at Concordia University Chicago. As a teacher of color in a Title I school, Karina advocates for marginalized students and sees the effects of that advocacy every day. Karina wants to be a voice for her students, a voice she did not hear as an immigrant student. Karina's MO is simply, "Everyone deserves an equal opportunity for success regardless of their background."

Kelsey Chaidez is a veteran third-grade teacher at Naper Elementary School in District 203. While Kelsey was a student at North Central College, she tutored, became a team leader and served as a summer intern for the Junior/ Senior Scholars, a college readiness program for marginalized youth, throughout college. Kelsey's leadership had a significant impact on the lives of many Junior/ Senior Scholars and multiple college students whom she mentored while they prepared to teach.



Irma Sandoval Vizcaíno graduated from the University of St. Francis as a mathematics major with a secondary certification. Irma participated in Project LEAD, Leaders in Education Advocating for Diversity, since her junior year and she is also member of the Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois. Irma readily shares how she has really enjoyed her five years ... and counting ... teaching mathematics in Chicago Public Schools.

Roy Aguilar is a primary grades bilingual teacher at a neighborhood school in Chicago's south side . Mr. Aguilar received his undergraduate degrees from North Central College in Naperville and Dominican University in River Forest. He earned a Master of Arts in Teaching from National Louis University. He is also working to complete his ESL/Bilingual endorsement. This is Mr. Aguilar's sixth year teaching in a bilingual setting. His favorite part about teaching is guiding EL students to overcome their struggles to achieve success.

Dr. Kasandra Posey brings over 15 years of experience in special education as a classroom teacher, administrator, and researcher. Dr. Posey served as the Director of Student Services for Civitas Education Partners and was previously a special education district representative for Chicago Public Schools (CPS). While at CPS, Dr. Posey conducted internal program audits across 48 schools using an IEP Review Tool and provided targeted professional development focused on improving the quality of special education services in schools with the most intensive needs. Dr. Posey's research focuses on restructuring transition services for students with disabilities through interagency collaboration and family engagement. Dr. Posey holds a Ph.D. and master's degree in special education from UIC, a master's degree in instructional leadership from Loyola University Chicago, and a bachelor's degree in special education from Western Michigan University.

Daniel Rodriguez has been a practicing actuary since 2010. He completed his undergraduate studies at North Central College, majoring in mathematics and minoring in secondary education. While at North Central College, Daniel volunteered in various roles for the Junior/Senior Scholars, a college readiness program for marginalized youth. While Daniel decided against becoming a professional educator, he does enjoy giving back to underserved communities.

Amanda Woycheese is a special education teacher in Joliet, Illinois with experience working in late primary and intermediate grades. She earned her Bachelor of Arts from Northern Illinois University in 2016 and began teaching in 2017. In 2022, she completed her Master's degree in Differentiated Instruction from Concordia University. Amanda is deeply committed to advocating for students with disabilities and promoting inclusive educational practices. She values relationship-building as the foundation for learning and strives to create supportive environments where all students can grow academically, socially, and emotionally.