

# Speakers

**NAPE Education Foundation Leadership Award Winner:**

## Jane Oates

**Assistant Secretary, Office of Employment and Training Administration, US Department of Labor, Tuesday, April 13, 2010, at the Luncheon**

Jane Oates joined Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis' leadership team at the Department of Labor in April, 2009. Confirmed as Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training on June 19, 2009, she now leads the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) in its mission to design and deliver high-quality training and employment programs for our nation's workers. Working with States and territories, municipalities, labor management organizations, employers, educational institutions, fellow Federal agencies, and other partners, ETA strives to assist workers in gaining the skills and credentials needed to enter careers that pay family supporting wages and offer opportunities for advancement. Prior to her appointment,

Ms. Oates served as Executive Director of the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education and Senior Advisor to Governor Jon S. Corzine. In that position Oates worked to strengthen the connections among high school, post-secondary education and the workforce. Ms. Oates served for nearly a decade as Senior Policy Advisor for Massachusetts Senator Edward M. Kennedy. She worked closely with the Senator on a variety of education, workforce and national service legislative initiatives, including the WIA and Perkins Act. Ms. Oates began her career as a teacher in the Boston and Philadelphia public schools and later as a field researcher at Temple University's Center for Research in Human Development and Education. She received her BA in Education from Boston College, and an M.Ed in Reading from Arcadia University.



## Brenda Dann-Messier

**Assistant Secretary, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, US Department of Education Wednesday, April 14, 2010, at the Policy Day Opening**



Dr. Brenda Dann-Messier was nominated by President Obama to be the Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education on July 14, 2009. On October 5, 2009 she was confirmed by the United States Senate and began her official duties on October 13, 2009. Prior to coming to the United States Department of Education Dr. Dann-Messier served for a decade as the President of Dorcas Place a community-

based adult education agency based in Providence, Rhode Island. While working to expand educational and career opportunities for low-income, low-literacy adults, Brenda has been commended by the Rhode Island Department of Education for her commitment to the low-skilled learner. Under her leadership, Dorcas Place Adult & Family Learning Center built its capacity to address the persistent demand for adult education in Rhode Island. Programs include day and evening ABE/ASE/ESOL classes, civics and financial literacy education, and college preparatory, family literacy, workforce education and job training programs linked with employers and industry sectors. The agency also has a statewide Clothing Collaborative program that provides professional attire free of charge to low-income adults. Dr. Dann-Messier has been and continues to be a tireless advocate for the adult learner.

## Russlynn Ali

**Assistant Secretary, Office for Civil Rights, US Department of Education, Wednesday, April 14, 2010, at the Policy Day Opening**

Russlynn Ali is the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education. As Assistant Secretary, Ms. Ali is Secretary Duncan's primary adviser on civil rights and responsible for enforcing U.S. civil rights laws as they pertain to education—ensuring the nation's schools, colleges and universities receiving federal funding do not engage in discriminatory conduct related to race, sex, disability or age. The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces five major civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. Until her appointment

to the Department of Education, Ms. Ali had been a Vice President of the Education Trust in Washington, D.C., and the founding Executive Director of the Education Trust-West in Oakland, Calif., since 2001. Ms. Ali was a teacher, served as the Liaison for the President of the Children's Defense Fund and as Assistant Director of Policy and Research at the Broad Foundation, for which she was also on loan as Chief of Staff to the President of the Los Angeles Unified School District's Board of Education. Ms. Ali practiced law after receiving her J.D. from Northwestern University School of Law and her BA in law and society from American University.



## Jessie DeAro

**Senior Policy Analyst, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, Thursday, April 15, 2010, at the STEM Luncheon**

Dr. Jessie DeAro's federal career started in 1999 when she was selected as a Presidential Management Fellow (PMF) after earning her doctorate in physical chemistry from the University of California at Santa Barbara. As a PMF she was recruited by the U.S. Department of Education where she managed the Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) program. In 2002 she became the special assistant to the Director of Institutional Development and Undergraduate Education

Services (IDUES). She then worked as a science program officer for the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) before she was recruited to the National Science Foundation (NSF) to become the Program Director for the Historically Black Colleges and Universities-Undergraduate Program (HBCU-UP) in 2003. In 2007 she was asked to take on the management of the NSF-wide ADVANCE program. With the ADVANCE program she worked to increase the representation and advancement of women in academic science and engineering careers. She is currently on detail to the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to work on science and engineering education, workforce, and diversity issues.