



## About Our Presenters & Performers

### James M. Limbaugh

Dr. James M. (Jim) Limbaugh has served as the president of West Los Angeles College, a diverse urban dual-purpose college of 9,000 students, since October 2016. During his tenure, the College has been named an Aspen Institute Top 150 institution; established two baccalaureate degree programs (Dental Hygiene and Avionics), developed an associate's degree in Climate Change Studies, and created the California Center for Climate Change Education, prioritizing curricular enhancement, workforce development, and advocacy initiatives, with a focus on social justice. Recently, Dr. Limbaugh was also selected as one of only 25 presidents nationwide to be named an Aspen Institute Presidential Fellow.

### Jo Tavares

Jo Tavares (she or they) is an oceanographer and earth system scientist, an educator, and a community organizer who loves to help people find ways to get involved in Climate Action. As the Director for the brand-new California Center for Climate Change Education at West LA College, Jo is working with students, faculty, and community members to solve the climate crisis while improving lives by prioritizing projects centered on justice and equity. Jo feels the happiest when she is close to nature, so she tries to spend all her free time outdoors running trails, snorkeling, surfing, gardening, composting, and upcycling everything and anything with her family and friends. Jo loves art, and is particularly into street theater, improv, and dancing (her favorite types of dance are "forró" and "samba de roda" which are traditional dances from Bahia, Brazil, where Jo is originally from).

### Chacko Sonny

Chacko Sonny is a videogame developer currently working as the Studio Head for a new internal studio for Netflix Games. Prior to that role, he was EP/VP for Blizzard Entertainment's smash hit Overwatch franchise. Before joining Blizzard, Chacko worked on several successful titles including the God of War franchise at Sony Santa Monica Studios, and built a new studio at Activision to support the online service for the Call of Duty series. He's been making games since 1995, starting on the MechWarrior 2 franchise, and later founded and operated an independent game development studio for ~12 years. He also ran the External Development group at Sony Santa Monica Studios, and has always been inspired by the innovation coming from small developers, including student led teams. As a result, he's really looking forward to seeing what the teams imagine!"

### Dana Claire

Dana Claire is an award-winning author whose stories explore identity, fate, and destiny in the crossroads of love and adventure. Her passion for romantic tension and spine-tingling action is revealed through her unforgettable characters who linger long after the last page. Dana is now sharing her expertise and stories

through speaking events and book signings, introducing more readers to the worlds she created as well as empowering fellow writers to build their literary empires. She lives in sunny Los Angeles, CA with her adoring husband living her dreams: writing books, telling stories, and changing the world, one page at a time.

## **Katy Foucar-Szocki**

Katy embodies the entrepreneurial spirit in the ever-evolving world of corporate innovation. Her journey is marked by a consistent commitment to exploration and growth, driven by her passion for innovation and adaptability. Holding a Master of Science in Creativity + Change Leadership from SUNY International Center for Creative Studies, Katy brings a distinctive perspective to innovation. Katy wears many hats in her present roles, including teaching ideation and creativity at the VCU School of Business and serving as the Senior Director of Client Strategy at Unboxed Training & Technology. Her approach centers around creating impactful learning experiences and leveraging skill-building technology, focusing on empowering continuous workplace learning and cultivating Skill Agility®—the ability to develop skills at the pace of change.

## **Eric Elder**

Eric started his career as a 2D animator at MTV on Beavis & Butt-Head and then moved to LA to work on King of the Hill & The Simpsons. When not working as a professional animator he spent 15 years working with the Art Institutes as an Instructor, then as an Academic Director and created the most successful Video Game production training programs in the system. He founded OW! (Online Worlds) Entertainment in 1997 to create virtual worlds for movie & TV properties. For the past few years, he has been focused on the emerging XR industry managing productions, designing pipeline models, game/experience design, strategic planning, and developing studio pitches for AR & VR based on major Hollywood IP. He currently spends most of his time as a Creative Media Consultant designing training programs and production pipelines for animation, video game & XR production. He is also actively a speaker at various industry-related events. He has accepted a new role as the project lead of the LA Game Project where he will be working to implement the new Game Art & Design program he helped get approved to 14 community colleges in Los Angeles. He will also be in charge of developing a new inter-campus eSports League.

## **Jennyfer Vasquez**

Jenyffer Vasquez is a Water Policy & Resources Analyst for West Basin Municipal Water District. In this capacity she manages water efficiency programs that serve a population of nearly one million residents in 17 cities and unincorporated areas in Los Angeles County. These programs play a key role in the District's efforts to diversify the water supply portfolio and reduce water demand. Jenyffer has years of collective experience managing water use efficiency programs in various capacities with retail and wholesale water agencies, as well as environmental non-profit roles. Jenyffer received a B.A. in Environmental Science and Policy from California State University, Long Beach. She holds a Water Use Efficiency Practitioner Certification with the American Water Works Association. Additionally, she has participated in the 2019 Cohort with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) and completed an online Water Distribution System Operation course with Sacramento State.

## **Katherine Boutry**

A full-time instructor of English and serves as the Director of the Creativity Studies Lab at West Los Angeles College. She is co-author of the college textbook *The West Guide to Writing*. Dr. Boutry earned her PhD from Harvard University and taught there for ten years as a lecturer and Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies, advising 350 students in life and career choices. As Director of the Creativity Studies Lab at West Los Angeles College, she launched the first Creativity Studies and Innovation certificate program at a community

college in the State of California. She spearheaded the annual The Creative Edge Creativity Conference, a TED Talk-like event around creativity. She is author of several articles on the link between Creativity and Well-Being. Dr. Boutry has presented her work at the American Creativity Association, the League for Innovation, the Torrance Creativity Roundtable; the Knowledge, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship Conference in Berlin, and at the Creativity Expert Exchange sponsored by the International Center for Creativity Studies at SUNY, Buffalo. She is the host of The Creativity Lab Podcast. As a graduate student, she received a Fulbright Scholarship to the Czech Republic. She created and directed the MFA in Creative Writing Program at Mount Saint Mary's University in Los Angeles. Dr. Boutry is a screenwriter and a member of the Writers Guild of America.

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