

### **Noemí O. Gallardo - Chair**

Noemí has served as GAAA Chair and alumni representative on the Greenlining Board of Directors since 2013 after graduating as the Greenlining Academy Legal Fellow. She is from Ventura County but now lives in Berkeley. Noemí holds a BA from Pepperdine University, an MPP from USC and a JD from UC Hastings. Her commitment to social justice stems from witnessing her parents struggle and succeed in the U.S. as immigrants from Mexico striving for the American dream. Noemí is now an attorney and works as the first Program Fellow at the Evelyn & Walter Haas Jr., Fund, focusing on advancing immigrant rights and integration.

Dedicated to ensuring all communities access opportunity and justice, after law school she served as Greenlining's 2012-2013 Energy & Telecommunications Legal Fellow, advocating for improved language access for low-income communities; helping prevent utility companies from imposing overly restrictive background check policies for green jobs; and helping ensure fair background check policies for Covered California jobs. Prior to Greenlining, Noemí established and ran her own interpreting business providing language services to limited English-proficient workers to access legal, medical and social services. Her years of schooling and Greenlining's leadership development helped hone her advocacy skills to work more boldly to empower people in her community.

In her free time, Noemí mentors college youth and has served as a Big Sister through the Big Brothers Big Sisters program for 15 years. She also serves on the Read-Aloud Volunteer Program Board and is engaged in advancing language access in elections through the Language Access Advisory Committee to the Secretary of State. Noemí is grateful to have had the opportunity to co-author and publish several articles about language access in various journals.

### **Alberto Avalos – Vice Chair**

Alberto grew up in the Boyle Heights and South Gate neighborhoods of Los Angeles, California and graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is passionate about increasing diversity in the tech sector, which he does as the Innovation and Technology Program Manager at the [Hispanic Heritage Foundation](#) where he co-founded the [Code as a Second Language \(CSL\)](#) national initiative.

His focus is introducing communities of color to computer programming and making technical training and careers accessible to our communities. His programs engage both students of color in public schools, and young professionals through internships, fellowships, and partnerships with leading tech companies.

### **John Christian (JC) De Vera - Treasurer**

JC De Vera is a Bay Area native, born and raised in east side San Jose, California. JC graduated *magna cum laude* and *Phi Beta Kappa* from UCLA in 2011 with a B.A. in Sociology and Asian American Studies, and is currently pursuing a Masters in Public Policy at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs. JC's commitment to social justice is rooted in his experiences and struggles growing up in a working-class, Pilipino immigrant family.

JC was the 2011-2012 Greenlining Communications Fellow and helped build Greenlining's social media strategy and infrastructure from the ground up. After graduating from the Academy, JC transitioned to a full-time position at Greenlining, where he served as the Communications Manager until Fall 2015. JC attributes his Greenlining Academy experience as being the most formative in his development as a young leader of color, and credits his tenure at Greenlining for shaping his life mission of eliminating social inequities across sectors.

JC was selected as the Valedictorian for the 2014 cohort of the Front Line Leaders Academy, and currently serves on the boards of Filipino Advocates for Justice, LaunchProgress PAC, and Lacuna Giving Circle.

### **Kenechukwu (Kene) Okocha – Internal Secretary**

Kene was born in Madison, Wisconsin to Nigerian immigrants. Kene graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2004 where he double majored in Industrial Engineering and Political Science. Following college, Kene attended the University of Wisconsin Law School and graduated in 2007. Kene is passionate about justice for all and now lives in Washington D.C., where he works as a Senior Sex Offense Assistant United States Attorney at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia.

After law school, Kene became the Greenlining Institute's first Legal Fellow, serving in the 2007-2008 fellowship class and working on issues facing the underserved in the field of consumer protection at the California Public Utilities Commission and regulations at the California Department of Insurance. Kene returned to Wisconsin from 2008-2010 to work at the Dane County District Attorney's Office in Madison as an Assistant District Attorney. He is now an Assistant U.S. Attorney. From an early age, Kene sought to be the advocate for the underprivileged and vulnerable in society. He fulfills this commitment by preparing underprivileged youth to participate in mock trials.

### **Ashley Arax – External Secretary**

Ashley Arax grew up in Fresno, California and currently lives in Richmond, CA. Ashley received her Master of Public Health from the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health in 2012, her BS in Environmental Biology from UC Berkeley and is a 2015 graduate of the UC Master Gardener program. Ashley is passionate about increasing access to healthy foods and building communities via sustainable gardening practices. She currently works as a Business Manager for Practice Fusion, a healthcare technology company connecting doctors, patients and data to improve the healthcare system and population and public health outcomes.

Ashley was a 2011 summer fellow at the Greenlining Institute, where she conducted policy research on the Affordable Care Act and its implications for small businesses, including the development of a presentation and report used to educate business owners about qualifying for tax credits. After graduating, Ashley was a consultant at COPE Health Solutions, a non-profit consulting company in Los Angeles that works with all-payers to expand access to health care in underserved communities. Ashley focused on the redesign of clinical delivery systems, including expanding access to specialty care and substance abuse treatment for patients in Los Angeles County. On her off-time, she volunteers to share her gardening knowledge to the public.

### **Sunaena Chhatry – Mentorship Chair**

Sunaena is a proud first generation immigrant who grew up in Nepal and East Palo Alto, California. Her first-hand experience growing up in a community suffering from the effects of redlining and poorly funded education system informs her work today. She is passionate about using the tools of public policy to create educational and economic opportunities for unreserved and marginalized communities.

Sunaena currently works at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) as the Senior Policy and Innovation Analyst of the Office of Financial Education. In this capacity, she manages the Bureau's financial education policy portfolio focused on children and youth. Before joining the Bureau, Sunaena was the Public Policy and Communications Manager at EARN, the leading non-profit provider of micro-savings services to low-income families in the United States. At EARN, Sunaena helped build and manage a statewide coalition, developed State-level policy proposals, and led financial access advocacy campaigns. Previously, she served as an Academy Associate at the Greenlining Institute. Sunaena was a Women's Policy Institute Fellow at the Women's Foundation of California. Sunaena holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of California, Berkeley.

### **Sydney Fang – Professional Development Chair**

Born and raised in the Bay Area, Sydney is the daughter of Chinese immigrants and refugees. Sydney was an undergraduate at UC Berkeley, where she studied Public Health and Public Policy. She is passionate about equity and now leads communications strategy for local organizing and statewide policy campaigns at the Asian Pacific Environmental Network.

Prior to APEN, she served as an Emerson National Hunger Fellow at the United Way of King County in Seattle and at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement in Washington, D.C. As a Bridges to Health Academy Summer Associate at Greenlining in 2013, Sydney co-authored the first report highlighting the lack of transparency in not-for-profit hospital community benefit practices.

She began her social justice career as a student leader in multicultural campus coalitions, where she focused on recruitment and retention efforts for underrepresented Asian Pacific Islanders and served as a student senator. Sydney has also organized Chinese home care workers and

served as a City of Berkeley Community Health Commissioner. She is an alumna of the Public Policy International Affairs Fellowship.

### **Isabel Cortes – Fund Development Chair**

Isabel was born and raised in Oaxaca, Mexico and moved to California in the year 2000 at the age of nine. Isabel joined the California State Senate in 2014 and works on policy relating to education, health, and environmental quality. While completing a double B.A. from Mills College and a Master of Public Policy, Isabel served as a community advocate for undocumented immigrants and women's rights.

Isabel's commitment to social justice ignited when she joined Greenlining as a Summer Associate in 2012. During her time at Greenlining, Isabel worked with the Economic Equity team and researched the impact of prepaid credit cards in communities of color. Isabel is a marathon runner and has recently started her photography hobby.