

Department of Educational Leadership, Evaluation and Organizational Development  
**Speaker Series**

Thursday, March 31st, 2016

11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

University Club, Mary Bingham Room

**Special Guest: Dr. Laura Perna**

“Improving higher education attainment for all students:  
The need for a comprehensive approach”



**Dr. Laura Perna** is a James S. Riepe Professor, founding Executive Director of the Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy (AHEAD), ([www.ahead-penn.org](http://www.ahead-penn.org)), Chair-elect of the Faculty Senate at the University of Pennsylvania, Faculty Fellow of the Institute for Urban Research, and faculty affiliate of the Penn Wharton Public Policy Initiative.

Her research identifies how social structures, educational practices, and public policies promote and limit college access and success, particularly for individuals from lower-income families and racial/ethnic minority groups, and has been featured by the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, National Public Radio, and other media outlets. Dr. Perna’s research has been funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences, Lumina Foundation, and other organizations.

Her most recent books are, *The Attainment Agenda: State Policy Leadership for Higher Education*, (with Joni Finney, 2014, Johns Hopkins University Press), and *The State of College Access and Completion: Improving College Success for Students from Underrepresented Groups* (with Anthony Jones, 2013, Routledge). She has been on editorial boards of leading journals in higher education, and has also provided testimony to the U.S. Senate’s Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee and U.S. House of Representative’s Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training.

Dr. Perna is a Fellow of the American Education Research Association (AERA) and a Penn Fellow. She is Past President of the Association of the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) and has served as Vice President of the American Educational Research Association’s Division J (Postsecondary Education). In 2003, Dr. Perna received the Promising Scholar/Early Career Achievement Award from ASHE. In 2010, the University of Pennsylvania honored her with the Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Foundation Award for Distinguished Teaching, and in the same year received the Robert P. Huff Golden Quill Award from the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.

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