

# TA Institute Panel- Lead On! Breaking New Ground

## Panelists Bios

### Shawn Aleong

*Disability and Civil Rights Activist (moderator)*

Shawn Aleong is a young African American man with cerebral palsy and an intellectual disability, as well as a disability and civil rights activist. He is a sophomore at Temple University, where he studies Legal Studies, Real Estate, and Finance. Aleong serves as Senior Advisor to Temple Student Government and sits on the Board of Advisers for Temple's Institute on Disabilities. He is also an intern at Disability Rights Pennsylvania and a member of the NAACP. Previously, he was a member of Philadelphia's Police Advisory Commission and the Board of Directors for The Arc of Philadelphia, an organization that advocates for the rights of people with disabilities.

### Gabriel Martinez

*Project Co-Coordinator, University of Arizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities*

Gabriel "Gabe" Martinez is currently Project Co-Coordinator at the University of Arizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities, where he has worked as a peer navigator and office assistant for two years. He is a 2016 graduate of the Sonoran Center's Project SEARCH, an employment preparation program. Martinez is a regular speaker and trainer for webinars, course guest lectures, high school classroom presentations, medical student education at the UArizona College of Medicine-Tucson, as well as a co-coordinator of a Native youth focused transition and employment program called the Finds Their Way: Communities for Youth Transition. He works as a peer navigator on multiple projects, including the Transition AHEAD Roundtable, a comprehensive youth-to-adult transition program. Martinez serves on the leadership group for Self-Advocacy Solutions and represents the Sonoran Center on the Association of University Centers on Disabilities' Council on Leadership in Advocacy.

### Santa Perez

*Chair, Nevada's Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities*

Santa Perez is a published author, mother, and self-advocate living with cerebral palsy in Las Vegas, Nevada. She currently serves as Chair of the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities and sits on numerous councils and committees, including the Executive Board of National Association of Council on Developmental Disabilities. Perez is also the Founding Member and President Emeritus of People First Nevada. She recently published her first book, *Sitting at Eye Level: My Life as an Advocate, a Professional, a Woman, a Mom and a Person with a Significant Disability*. She earned her B.A. in Psychology from Cal State Northridge. She is a proud mother to her son, Noah.