

## **Dr. Robert Franco**

Dr. Franco is an ecological anthropologist focusing on contemporary Hawaiian, Samoan, and Pacific Islander educational, employment, health, and cultural issues. He has published scholarly and policy research on Samoan political and cultural change, the meaning and management of water in ancient Hawaii, and sociocultural factors affecting Pacific tuna fisheries. In 2009, he led the publication of American Samoa's first written history, a required 9<sup>th</sup> grade textbook.

He currently serves as the College's accreditation liaison officer, and provides national leadership on diversity and democracy issues for the Association of American Colleges and Universities, American Council on Education, and the Carnegie Foundation. As Senior Faculty Fellow for Community Colleges at Campus Compact, he conducts training, technical assistance and research dissemination in five states per year (36 states and 3 U.S. territories in total). He has also presented service-learning workshops at the University of Bologna, Italy, and a community center in Madrid (in Spanish). He was recently selected one of 20 national "Beacons of Vision, Hope, and Action" by the Community College National Center for Community Engagement.

He provides community college, university, and conference audiences with research-based training designed to improve retention, degree completion, and transfer rates through service-learning, community-based research, and authentic partnerships. His current research and training focuses on service-learning and reducing the minority academic achievement gap, thereby strengthening the liberal arts, workforce development and civic missions of community colleges. He currently serves as a Co-Principal Investigator on three major National Science Foundation grants and as a Faculty Fellow for NSF's Science and Civic Engagement initiative.