Franque Michele Bains

Environmental Advocacy | Strategic Leadership | Lasting Results

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Relationship-driven executive director with 15+ years of experience building organizational cultures of passion and care that propel lasting initiatives forward. Through listening and connection, it is powerful to see what we can build together.

EDUCATION

MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION & MATHEMATICS — Claremont Graduate University

AWARDS

- 2025 Sageland Collaborative Partner of the Year | Celebration of leaders in environmental advocacy.
- 2025 Practitioner in Residence | University of Utah Environmental Humanities Leadership Honor.
- 2024 Utah Business Living Color Award | Honoring work towards a more equitable and inclusive Utah.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- Organizational Governance
- Strategic Leadership
- Strategic Process Design
- Coalition Building
- Community Power Building
- Organizational Change
- Trauma-Informed Design
- Campaign Development
- Community Led Conservation
- Volunteer Leadership Development
- Staff Management

WORK EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER DIRECTOR — Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club | 2024 - Current

Executive director driving environmental advocacy, social justice initiatives, and organizational growth.

- Direct strategic planning, staff supervision, and financial management for a high-impact environmental organization, coordinating a team of 3 staff, 6 interns, 15 volunteer campaign leaders, and 22,000 supporters statewide. Oversee impactful legislative, administrative, fundraising, and community advocacy campaigns that elevate environmental issues in Utah.
- Key Outcomes: Strategic fundraising and grant writing maintained a healthy donor base despite expectations of a drop in donations during a tumultuous market. Targeted grant writing resulted in an award that increased our annual revenue by 31% and tripled our staffing, extending our capacity, enabling us to build campaigns that are well-resourced, expanding our media reach by 40%, leading to critical campaign wins for our lands, community advocates, and clean energy transitions in schools.
- Lasting Results: Shifting our organizational financial structure utilizing a collaborative and strategic process incorporating roadmapping, sense-making, and input gathering to collectively bring our executive board and national stakeholders along as we created a large shift in organizational structure, growing our team from 2 people to 9 to expand our work outside of the Salt Lake Valley.

PROGRAM MANAGER — PROG Foundation | 2022 - 2024

Stepped into a dynamic role to launch a philanthropy initiative supporting the West Valley Community in career advancement and economic stability. Fostered an ethos of co-design and collaboration between government, education, and non-profit partners with our target community to identify and fund programs.

- Provided organizational management, partnership development, and strategic planning to our team to build programs for a career-support-focused portfolio of giving.
- Key Outcomes: Designed and launched request for proposal processes that identified viable programming with a strong track record of outcomes that can benefit youth ages 16 to 24 in West Valley City, Utah. Worked to launch a community center implementing community-led design through a rigorous focus group process, managed project development and implementation for landscape analysis at the implementation of the center.
- Lasting Results: Grant recipients launched high school, higher ed, and entrepreneur training programs boasting 85% retention rates, helping participants gain career opportunities throughout Utah.

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WORK EXPERIENCE CONT.

FACILITATION AND NEGOTIATION ADJUNCT — Westminster University, Salt Lake City | 2019 – Current

Joined the Westminster University Department of Education to teach future educators a curriculum focusing on Facilitating and Negotiating for Social Change and Writing to Heal Trauma.

- Designing and teaching a curriculum rooted in participatory and collaborative processes that equip students with the skills needed to facilitate groups through exploration to targeted decision making for students in a Master's of Community and Organizational Leadership and Master's of Education programs.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIST — Contractor | 2016 – Current

Hired as a contractor to oversee the design and facilitation of ongoing community engagement strategies, providing organizations with the tools necessary to align community voice and organizational priorities.

- Key outcomes: 90% of volunteer retention in community-driven education initiatives due to the initiation and design of a task force and coordinated board involvement.
- Lasting Results: Hires of people of color (POC) in leadership roles, POC-led programming, and a diversified volunteer pool due to community-led initiatives.

Key Contracts

- Tracy Aviary | Worked with Education Department staff to gain community input that will allow them to develop programming that reaches a broader audience, in particular, low-income families in South Salt Lake, persons with disabilities, teens, and Latinx kids and families. Through targeted focus groups, the activation of a Latino Task Force, and strategic prioritization, this contract outlined the needs of our targeted communities, helping to create opportunities that matched their desire to engage with nature.
- University of Utah | Worked with the staff and students at the Honors Department to develop a student-led program training students to hold critical conversations about race. Students held 30 conversations on campus within the contract, culminating in a town hall of student voices outlining target asks for support.

NETWORK DIRECTOR — United Way of Salt Lake | 2019- 2020

Designed and implemented strategies with cross-sector teams, facilitating processes that helped groups improve educational outcomes for 3rd-grade reading and comprehension, 8th-grade mathematics, and chronic absence for school districts in Northern Utah.

- Key Outcomes: Provided coaching, strategic planning, meeting design, and facilitation, centering this work in human-centered design, equity-based community engagement, and collective impact.
- Lasting Results: Launch of the iReady math program, which expanded from our middle schools to local elementary schools.

MATH AND LEADERSHIP EDUCATOR — Various Roles | 2010 - 2016

Chosen to serve as an educator to trailblaze restorative practice-based programs focused on improving student outcomes in collaboration with administrators and school counselors to craft alternatives to suspension.

- Key Outcomes: Produced an award-winning program of student-led videos emphasizing anti-bullying themes. Organized programs for school climate, socio-emotional wellness, and student leadership.
- Lasting Results: Developed curriculum focused on problem-solving and project-based learning in mathematics through activities that developed youth skills in collaboration and design thinking.

HIGHLIGHT OF PUBLICATIONS, PERFORMANCE, & PUBLIC SPEAKING

1. "America Has a Problem" No Kings Speech, October 2025
2. "DreamSpace in the Environmental Movement" Student Art Exhibit, April 2025
3. "If You Love Public Lands" Utah News Dispatch, April 2025
4. "Solution Chasers" Great Salt Lake Rally, January 2025
5. "Yesterday" Motivational Performance, SheMoney Summit, June 2024
6. "New World Coming" Torrey House Press, November 2021