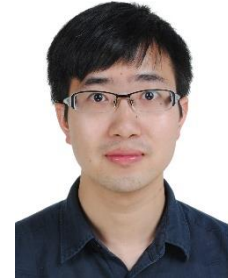**Title of Project**
High School English Learners and Access to Higher Education:
From College Aspirations to College Enrollments

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TIRF Research Topic Investigated
Migrants and Refugees: Teaching and Assessing English

Project Summary
English learners (ELs) are a quickly growing school-age population in most Anglophone immigrant-receiving countries. For example, they represent 10% of U.S. K-12 students. With an urgent need for a highly educated workforce, the ability of nations like the U.S. to effectively prepare ELs in schools has become an important question. However, a considerable gap exists between U.S. ELs and non-ELs in college enrollment rates. While a substantive scholarship has focused on enhancing pedagogical practices for ELs, much less has examined ELs' access to higher education. The small but growing research on EL college access mostly comprises qualitative and descriptive studies at regional levels; in contrast, little is known about how broader national sociocultural contexts and historical trends are affecting ELs' college access. This dissertation study seeks to fill this gap by investigating how nested individual, family, school, and state factors have contributed to U.S. ELs' variable performance in comparison to their non-EL peers. The study will also examine how these factors have evolved over the past three decades. Using innovative multilevel statistical methods, this study will analyze three nationally representative large-scale data sets from the U.S. Department of Education (HSLS:09, ELS:2002, and NELS:88), which include longitudinal educational surveys of students, their parents, and educators in the past three decades. This dissertation aims to contribute to the field by presenting new findings of ELs' college access experiences, innovating advanced statistical methodologies in EL educational inquiries, and providing implications to educators about effective practices that assist underrepresented immigrant students' academic learning.