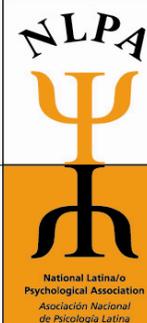
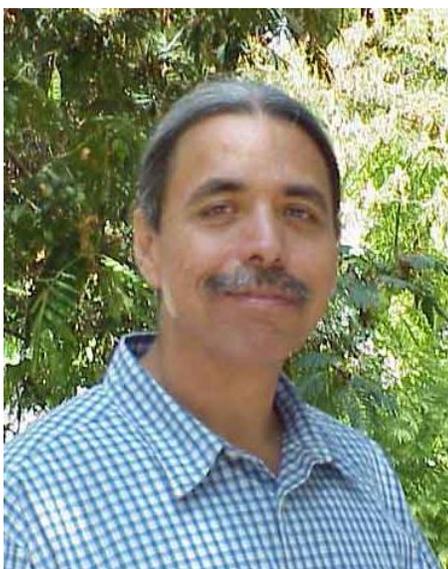


# El Boletín

The Newsletter of the National Latina/o Psychological Association



## From the President Traditional Wellbeing Practices



I welcome you to the Fall edition of *El Boletín*. Since my initial address to you in the prior edition, our membership has continued to grow (in part thanks to our recent NLPA conference). In addition, our executive board is strong and stable, adding to the vitality and commitment of the association. Further, there is a strong and rising interest in Latina/o psychology that is especially evident in the collaborative efforts that are taking place in order to establish our own peer-reviewed journal.

After my involvement over the past two years, it is with mixed feelings that I say goodbye to you as president of the National Latina/o Psychological Association. This involvement culminated recently at our

national conference in Costa Mesa, California. For those who did not attend: It was a significant celebration of our talents, expertise, and investment in various areas of Latina/o Psychology, including the conference's theme around the role of spirituality and tradition in healing. The keynote addresses were outstanding, as were the workshops and presentations. As a whole, the conference highlighted our mutual connectedness as Latino scholars, practitioners, administrators, and students. I was most impressed with our collegiality, mutual connectedness, and ability to share personal histories and professional areas of interest, all of which underscored our spirit of *familia*.

I encourage you as members of our association to invest in this the national association that represents your professional interests and our collective involvement in our respective communities. It is through your investment in NLPA that we become a stronger force for the betterment of our respective families and communities, and that we develop the necessary research, best practices, and social policies that will bring about

effective change. Toward that end, I encourage each of us to take an active role in NLPA and allow our involvement to be heard so that we can become a salient voice for Latina/o communities across the country.

Thank you for the support you have provided me as president of our association.

Un Abrazo,

Joseph M. Cervantes, Ph.D., ABPP  
Professor  
California State University, Fullerton

President  
National Latina/o Psychological  
Association, 2006-2008

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## Noticias

NLPA events and Accomplishments

### ACHIEVEMENTS

#### Meeting the needs of growing Latina/o populations: The Connecticut Latino Behavioral Health System.

Supported by the ongoing collaboration of the Yale University Department of Psychiatry and the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), the Connecticut Mental Health Center's (CMHC) Hispanic Clinic/*Clínica Hispana* has been a leading community provider of culturally responsive mental health and addiction services to the adult monolingual Spanish speaking Latina/o communities in New Haven and the surrounding areas.

However, recognizing that the significant growth of the area's Latina/o population exceeded its service capabilities, the CMHC along with more than twelve local organizations have introduced a network of accessible and culturally appropriate services for local Latinas/os: The CT Latino Behavioral Health System (LBHS).

Under the administrative oversight of the *Clínica Hispana*, the LBHS ex-

pands direct clinical services and recovery-oriented programming at 13 LBHS sites, adding five new full-time clinical positions. A team of Latina/o clinical psychologists at the *Clínica Hispana* (and current NLPA members) comprise the leadership of the LBHS: Luis M. Añez, Psy.D., Director, Michelle Silva, Psy.D., Associate Director, Manuel Paris, Psy.D., Director of



**Luis M. Añez, PsyD, Michelle Silva, PsyD, & Manuel Paris, PsyD**

Program Development, and Luis Bedregal, Ph.D., Director of Evaluation, are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations, coordination of services across agencies, and the design and implementation of a Latino behavioral health training series. As a critical element, LBHS focuses on promoting culturally competent behavioral health care. All new and existing staff

at member agencies are offered the LBHS Training Academy, which includes modules explaining –among other topics- the commonalities and differences among Latina/o subgroups, immigration and acculturation, spiritual beliefs, and the integration of Latina/o cultural constructs in the clinical setting.

Because community responsiveness and collaboration are considered essential toward creating positive and sustainable change for the state's Latina/o population, the LBHS will continue efforts to increase the number of bilingual and bicultural trained staff, promote utilization of evidence-based practices, and advocate at the local and state levels to address policy issues affecting the Latina/o community.

The creation of the LBHS was made possible by a special funding allocation from the Connecticut State Legislature, achieved with the crucial support of State Representative Juan Candelaria. The establishment of the LBHS marks CMHC, its *Clínica Hispana*, and its supporting institutions, as leaders in the provision of culturally competent mental health services.

In addition to the events and accomplishments of the National Latina/o Psychological Association, each issue of *El Boletín* features content centered around a particular topic considered important to the membership.

This issue is focused on the role of traditional Latina/o wellbeing practices and spirituality in contemporary psychology practice with US Latinas/os. Topical coverage begins on page 8.

**Over 8 Million Dollars in Large Grant Funding Awarded to NLPA Members.**

NLPA members have recently experienced a tremendous amount of success in their pursuit of research and service funding. Three distinguished NLPA members have been awarded grants of 1.9 million dollars or more. Linda Castillo PhD, a NLPA member from the Center on Dis-

ability and Development at Texas A&M University is a co-director of a recently awarded \$2.7 million dollar six-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The grant, awarded under the Gaining Early

Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), will allow Dr. Castillo and her colleagues to prepare over 1,000 seventh-graders in the Bryan Intermediate School District for college. GEAR UP is focused on improving school completion and college attendance rates for first-generation students, students of color and students with disabilities. This is Dr. Castillo's second GEAR UP grant. Of the work conducted under the GEAR UP program, Dr. Castillo says *"I am very excited to continue this important work ... our team consists of university faculty and staff, doctoral and*

*master's students, school principals and counselors, teachers, parents, and religious and community organizations all united to address the social justice educational issues in our community."*

Along with colleagues at the University of California, San Francisco, NLPA member Elena Flores PhD was awarded a highly competitive \$3.8 million dollar five-year grant from the Na-

will lead to critical information for family -focused, culturally sensitive behavioral interventions targeting obesity among Mexican American children.

NLPA 2006 Star Vega Distinguished Service awardee Eduardo Morales PhD has recently obtained not one, but two large grants. The first of these projects, a \$1.94 million dollar three-year grant from the California Department of



**NLPA's Million Dollar Scholars**

Eduardo Morales, PhD; Elena Flores, PhD; Linda Castillo, PhD.

Mental Health, will allow the California School of Professional psychology to provide 61 stipends over a three-year period to students at the CSPP programs who will then work for at least one year at a public facility contracted by public

tional Institutes of Health. With this funding, Dr. Flores and her colleagues are examining parental influences on obesity among Mexican American Children. Using a longitudinal approach, Dr. Flores and her colleagues are looking at parental and family members' dietary-related behaviors, including child-feeding practices, parental modeling of eating, and family meal routines. The research will assess whether these behaviors are affected by social and cultural factors, and whether they predict children's dietary intake and weight status. This study

mental health services in California. The second grant is a personal contract from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for the pilot testing of institutes targeted at high school and community college Latinos/as in two U.S. cities. The purpose of these institutes is to develop a workforce pipeline of Latinas/os into behavioral health and substance abuse services through workshops on careers in behavioral health and financing higher education, and through an interactive mentoring/

(continued on page 4)

## Noticias

### NLPA Events and Accomplishments

#### (Grants. Continued from p. 3)

coaching system that uses existing social networking platforms.

The tremendous successes of our NLPA colleagues in achieving these competitive awards, along with the excellent work that has earned these awards, serve as an inspiration to our membership. Enhorabuena to doctors Castillo, Flores, and Morales!

**NLPA Celebrates its Members' Accomplishments.** During the recent biennial conference in Costa Mesa, NLPA members recognized the winners of the organization's 2008 awards. NLPA's Distinguished Professional Career Award, conferred upon a psychologist whose lifetime contributions have greatly advanced an agenda congruent with NLPA's mission, went to Dr. Azara Santiago-Rivera, a Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and sitting past-president of NLPA. Dr. Santiago-Rivera is an influential expert in the areas of multicultural competence, bilingual therapy, and the treatment of depression in Latinas/os. She has co-authored two books, *The Puerto Rican Diaspora: Its History and Contributions* and *Counseling Latinos and la Familia*, which have greatly advanced our understanding of Latinas/os in the United States. In addition to her leadership within NLPA, Dr. Santiago-Rivera has

served as vice president of the Latino Interest Network of the Association of Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD), and president of Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) within the American Counseling Association.

Dr. Jeanette Castellanos, Director of the Social Science Academic Resource Center at the University of California Irvine, was winner of NLPA's Star Vega Distinguished Service Award, conferred upon a psychologist who has distinguished him or herself through service to the Latino/a community. Dr. Castellanos, who also serves as a Lecturer in the Department of Social Sciences and the Chicano/Latino Studies Program at Irvine, is a recognized leader in the promotion of college success among racial and ethnic minority students. She has previously received the Samel Turner Mentor Award from APA's division 12, which celebrated her outstanding commitment to minority education and research. Dr. Castellanos has co-edited two books, *The Majority in the Minority: Expanding the Representation of Latina/o Faculty, Administrators and Students in Higher Education* and *The Latina/o Pathway to the PhD: Abriendo Camino*, both of which address Latina/o experiences in higher education.

Lisa Flores PhD and Lisa Sanchez-Johnson PhD were both honored with NLPA's Distinguished Professional Early Career Award. Dr. Flores is an

Associate Professor and co-director of the Center for Multicultural Research, Training, and Consultation at the University of Missouri. She is a recognized expert in the educational and career development of Mexican American adolescents and young adults. Currently serving as Editor of the *Journal of Career Development*, she has previously served on the editorial board of this and other journals. Her research and professional activities have earned her numerous grants and awards. Dr. Sanchez-Johnson is an assistant professor at the University of Chicago where she also serves as Director of the Multicultural Health Research Program. Her research examining health factors and interventions in Latinas/os has been successfully funded by the National Institutes of Health.

NLPA's outstanding students were also recognized. Alejandro Morales and Tiffany Schiffner received the Cynthia de las Fuentes Dissertation Awards and NLPA Dissertation Award, respectively. Mr. Morales' dissertation, supervised by Dr. Oksana Yakushko of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, examined language brokering among Mexican immigrant families living in the Midwest. Dr. Schiffner's dissertation -supervised by past NLPA Distinguished Professional Early Career Award winner, Dr. Lydia Buki of the

(continued on page 5)

**(Awards.** Continued from p. 4)

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, looked at Mexican American college students' constructions of masculinity and health beliefs. Finally, Mr. Henry Acosta, a doctoral student in Social Work at Rutgers University was given the NLPA *Distinguished Student Service Award*. Mr. Acosta is currently the Executive Director of the National Resource Center for Hispanic Mental Health, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting quality mental health services to Latinas/os.

This year's awards committee was chaired by president elect Ed Delgado Romero (winner of NLPA's Distinguished Professional Early Career Award in 2006) and made up entirely of previous NLPA award winners including Guillermo Bernal, Eduardo Morales, Theresa Segura-Herrera and Hector Adames.

### **NLPA Students Win Prestigious National Fellowships.**

NLPA student members Michelle Cruz-Santiago and Kristine Molina were recently announced among the winners of the highly competitive Ford Foundation Diversity Predoctoral Fellowships. Mrs. Cruz-Santiago is currently a 4<sup>th</sup> year graduate student in clinical/community psychology at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Her program of research focuses on the psychosocial

development of Latina/o adolescents (her project funded by the Ford Foundation is titled *Acculturation stressors among Latino families: A mixed-method and cross-community approach*).

Ms. Molina is a doctoral candidate in the joint program in psychology and Women's Studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Her research is aimed at understanding the various socio-cultural and context-specific dimensions of resilience that enable Latina/o youth to successfully negotiate their academic demands and career aspirations. The high caliber of Ms. Molina's work also earned her a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, which –because of funding guidelines- she chose to accept as the sole source of support for her work.

Administered by the National Research Council (NRC), the Ford Foundation Diversity Fellowships seek to increase the number of professors who can and will use diversity as a resource for enriching the education of all students. These fellowships provide three years of support for individuals engaged in graduate study

leading to a doctoral degree. More information is available at <http://www7.nationalacademies.org/FORDfellowships/Fordpredoc.html>. The National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships are competitive awards that aim to ensure the vitality of the human resource base of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in the United States and to reinforce its diversity. These fellowships also provide three years of support for graduate study leading to research-based master's or doctoral degrees and are intended for students who are in the early stages of their graduate study. More information about these fellowships can be found at <https://www.fastlane-beta.nsf.gov/grfp/Login.do>.

Mrs. Cruz-Santiago and Ms. Molina's success in obtaining these highly prized awards is a testament to the high quality of their work, and a promise that the future of Latina/o psychology is in good hands.



**Kristine Molina and Michelle Cruz-Santiago**

## Noticias

### NLPA Events and Accomplishments

#### Irene López, PhD Nominated for Teaching Excellence Award.

Dr. Irene López has been nominated for the Kenyon College Trustee Teaching Excellence Award. Established in 1999-2000 by the College's Board of Trustees, this award recognizes and rewards faculty for exemplary teaching informed by creative scholarship. The awards carry \$5,000 stipends and are intended to promote excellence by providing increased visibility for the College's most talented teacher-scholars. The Kenyon College Board of Trustees will make its final choice in February and winners will be announced at the Kenyon College Honors Day Convoca-

tion in April. Best of luck to our distinguished NLPA colleague.

#### NLPA Member's Expertise Contributes to Precedent-Setting Immigration Cases.

Roy Aranda, PsyD, J.D., has put his dual background in psychology and law to good use as an expert in cases involving immigration law. His recent role as an expert in a case dealing with the familial abuse of three children back in their country of origin, Honduras, helped lead to an 18-page decision granting these children asylum under 8 C.F.R. § 208.13(b)(1)(iii)(A).

Although the case is under appeal,

Dr. Aranda anticipates that the ruling will be upheld. Dr. Aranda believes that, if upheld, the ruling "*will further strengthen this type of humanitarian-based asylum and open the doors for similar cases to request political asylum when other avenues are closed.*" Dr. Aranda's work serves as an example of the diverse and specialized settings in which the unique skills of NLPA members can make important contributions.

**El Boletín launches ELBO, a web-based resource for the NLPA community.** Ever read a story or article in El Boletín and wished that you



#### Irene López, PhD on the role of NLPA in her professional development.

Dr. Irene López is part of a generation of productive young NLPA members greatly advancing Latina/o psychology. Born and raised in the Bronx, Dr. López completed her undergraduate education at Vassar College and her training as a clinical psychologist at Kent State University. She has received numerous awards including a faculty fellowship from the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education and an excellence in teaching award from the University of Missouri-Columbia. Now a professor at Ohio's Kenyon College, she's held positions as a National Institute of Mental Health postdoctoral scholar (with the Family Research Consortium IV) and as a Visiting Scholar at Rutgers University. She is widely published in journals including the Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, the Journal of Family Psychology, Psychological Assessment, and the Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences. Recently, Dr. López took the time to speak with El Boletín on the role that NLPA has played in her professional development.

*"I joined NLPA as a graduate student seeking a sense of community with likeminded scholars. I have never regretted this decision. Unlike other organizations and that I am a part of, I look forward to reading the emails of fellow NLPA'ers because I know they will be informative and helpful to me and my work. It was through NLPA that I found out about numerous opportunities, including the Multicultural Teaching Scholarship (sponsored by NLPAer - Dr. Lisa Flores), and the NIMH Family Research Consortium Post Doctoral Program (thanks to NLPAer Dr. Melanie Domenech Rodriguez). Both opportunities have been extraordinarily helpful to my career and I have NLPA to thank for exposing me to these opportunities and amazing scholars. I look forward to my continued involvement in this wonderful organization."*

had seen it sooner? Or that it had included more information on the subject? El Boletín Online (ELBO) has been created to respond to these and other concerns. ELBO is *El Boletín's* on-line blog, which is updated with new content of relevance to NLPA's membership several times a week. The content includes press releases, contributions by NLPA members, and articles from other sources that are of interest to Latina/o psychology. Other features include online polls of members' opinions on different topics, the ability to leave comments in response to stories and postings, and picture slideshows of NLPA events (such as the recent conference). All of this can be found at <http://nlpaboletin.blogspot.com/>. ELBO also offers you the opportunity to register to receive notifications when new content is posted to the blog.

## MILESTONES

### Awarded

**Irene López, PhD**, as an Early Research Scientist member of the National Hispanic Science Network on Drug Abuse.

**Azara Santiago-Rivera, PhD**, as Fellow, by the Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues (APA division 45).

**Veronica Vargas**, a PhD in clinical psychology, by the California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University, Los Angeles.

International University, Los Angeles.

### Promoted

**Donna Castañeda, PhD**, to Professor, Psychology Department, San Diego State University-Imperial Valley Campus.

**Eduardo Morales, PhD**, to Distinguished Professor, Alliant International University's California School of Professional Psychology –San Francisco.

### Transitioned

**Ignacio David Acevedo-Polakovich, PhD**, to Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Central Michigan University.

**Bryn Harris, PhD**, to Assistant Professor, University of Colorado at Denver Health Sciences Center.

**Veronica Vargas, PhD**, to Postdoctoral Fellow, UCLA Counseling and Psychological Services.

## CALENDAR

### December 16-18, 2008.

**NIH Summit: The Science of Eliminating Health Disparities.** Held at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center (National Harbor, Maryland) and sponsored by the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD), this summit will focus on the intersections of science, practice, and policy as it helps to define the future direction of health disparities research. The Summit is organized into five tracks: (1) Translating

Science to Policy and Practice; (2) Health Disparity Diseases and Conditions; (3) Health Disparity Target Populations; (4) Building Capacity, and (5) Partnerships, Collaborations, and Opportunities. Registration is free at [www.ncmhd.nih.gov](http://www.ncmhd.nih.gov) and attendance is expected to exceed 3,000 including the best and brightest scientists in the field of health disparities.

### June 28 – July 2.

**XXXII Interamerican Psychology Congress: "Psychology, a road to peace and democracy."** Held at the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala (Guatemala City, Guatemala), the congress seeks to strengthen ties that will improve individuals' quality of life and build peace by creating a space for the sharing and integration of psychological contributions from Guatemala and those of other countries in the Americas. More information can be found at [www.sip2009.org](http://www.sip2009.org).

### October, 2009.

**The Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture 2009 Diversity Challenge.** Held at Boston college, this conference will examine of racial identity and cultural factors in treatment, research and policy. The call for proposals will be available through the ISPRC website, [www.bc.edu/isprc](http://www.bc.edu/isprc), beginning in January 2009.

## Traditional Latina/o Wellbeing: A culturally sensitive approach

Rebecca Rangel, MA, ATR and Marie L. Miville, Ph.D.

*“¡Ven es la hora para pasar el huevo!” the adults would say on New Year’s Eve. They taught me that by passing the egg up and down a person’s body while saying a prayer, the ‘bad’ energy would be taken away... I would later be taught that this family ritual was a *limpia*, a cleansing.”*

-Rebeca Rangel

As exemplified in the personal story above, the upbringing of many Latinas/os is shaped by spirituality of various forms, which can become an important source of personal meaning. For example, *curanderismo*, an indigenous method that was revived in the Spanish Renaissance, is practiced across the Southwest and Mexico (Velasquez, Arellano, & McNeill, 2004). It is usually carried out by a *curandero/a* to heal emotional conditions or cultural syndromes such as *susto* (extreme fright or fear) or *mal de ojo* (the evil eye). Similarly, in *Santería* -usually found in Cuba, Puerto Rico and other Caribbean countries- *babalawos* (high priests) carry out rituals using special herbs, candles, potions, incense, and other ritual objects for healing purposes (Aponte & Wohl, 2000). In these traditional practices, in order to fully “heal,” individuals must restore balance within their selves, in relation to others, and with the spiritual world.

The incorporation of ancient beliefs and practices related to healing and wellbeing seems to find a welcome home among some contemporary Latinas/os. Beyond the continued (and arguably growing) practice of *curanderismo* and *Santería*, many modern Latinas/os seem to yearn for perspectives on wellbeing grounded in ancestral practices. One clear example comes via the popular writings of Ruiz (1997), who presents an approach to living grounded in principles that he traces to ancient Toltec wisdom and shamanic perspectives. In one best selling book presenting this approach, Ruiz identifies *four agreements* that can help individuals through difficult times. (These include “being impeccable with your word, not taking anything personally,

not making assumptions, and always doing your best.”). Along the same vein, Ruiz (1999) has described three fundamental Toltec “masteries” (i.e., Awareness, Transformation, and Love) that help reveal the true nature of humans.

Latinas/os, both traditional and modern, appear to draw much from their cultures’ ancient beliefs and healing practices, highlighting a need for psychologists to be aware of and understand these beliefs in order to provide culturally competent services to the broadest possible array of Latinas/os.

Although it wasn’t until the 1960s that formal study and a professional literature regarding traditional community methods of healing had its beginnings, contemporary Latina/o psychologists have developed approaches for the incorporation of traditional beliefs and practices into therapy and related activities (e.g., Velasquez, Arellano, & McNeill, 2004). McNeill and Cervantes’ (2008) new book, *Latina/o Healing Practices: Mestizo and Indigenous Perspectives*, is a promising reference on this topic and presents specific culturally relevant traditional practices for Latina/o populations. El Boletín’s review of this text, conducted by newsletter editor I. David Acevedo-Polakovich PhD, begins on page 12 of this issue.

Naturally, Latina/o perspectives on healing and wellbeing continue to evolve, often independently of the work that may be done by Latina/o mental health scholars. The Community Defined Evidence Project (CDEP), presented in the article by Martinez and colleagues (p. 9) and commented on in a subsequent piece by Domenech-Rodriguez and Acevedo-Polakovich (p.11), recognizes this reality and seeks to identify promising practices, developed within Latina/o communities, that promote health and wellbeing in their endemic conceptualizations.

Among many Latinas/os, both traditional and modern, ancient approaches to healing are clearly of importance. It is difficult to imagine a relevant Latina/o psychology that does not recognize and respond to these practices and beliefs.

## Community Defined Evidence: What is it? and what can it do for Latinas/os?

Ken Martinez, Psy.D. and the Community Defined Evidence Project (CDEP) Writing Group

In early Spring of 2007, the National Alliance of Multi-ethnic Behavioral Health Associations (NAMBHA), the US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the Annie E. Casey Foundation brought together a number of key stakeholders in order to enable the formation of the National Network to Eliminate Disparities in Behavioral Health (NNED; [www.nned.net](http://www.nned.net)). The NNED envisions a US behavioral healthcare landscape in which all culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse individuals and families thrive in, participate in, and contribute to healthy communities. One of the first major initiatives undertaken by the NNED is the Community Defined Evidence Project (CDEP), an initiative conducted in partnership with the National Latino Behavioral Health Association (NLBHA) and sponsored by SAMHSA and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. In this article, some of the key architects and stewards of the CDEP explain its background, its objectives, and its potential to advance behavioral healthcare for Latinas/os and other culturally-diverse US groups.

Disparities in mental health care for Latinas/os are widening, especially as they relate to access, availability, quality, and outcomes of care. These continuing and persistent disparities are troubling given that Latinas/os are the most rapidly growing ethnic group in the U.S. and currently are either underserved and/or inappropriately served in the mental health system (New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, 2003). The dissemination of empirically-supported treatments (ESTs) and evidence-based treatments (EBTs) appears to some as a solution to the disparities that Latinas/os experience in the behavioral health system. However, if implemented without sufficient attention to the existing cultural knowledge, beliefs, and practices that are respected and highly valued within the Latina/o community, ESTs and EBTs could exacerbate and deepen existing inequities.

Traditionally, ESTs have been developed using a top down approach that many times does not take the dynamics of communities into account (Zayas et al., 2004). However, there is contemporary evidence of many effective and culturally appropriate practices in Latino communities that have never been formally measured empirically nor documented. The Community Defined Evidence Project (CDEP) gives serious consideration to the culture, world view, values, beliefs, practices and traditions of communities in its attempt to discover and/or develop practices that work with ethnic/racial and indigenous groups, and recognizes that Latina/o communities, like other indigenous communities, have historically used other ways to measure what works for them.

***“Traditionally, ESTs have been developed using a top down approach that ... does not take the dynamics of communities into account.”***

The CDEP hopes to develop a complement to traditional ESTs and EBTs by looking to Latina/o communities as the source of their own practices and evidence. What is an alternative? “Community defined evidence” is proposed as an alternative option. It is a “ground up” approach as opposed to a “top down” approach to measuring “evidence” of what works in Latina/o communities. As the name implies, communities themselves define evidence (what works for them) and our work as researchers is to “discover” as much or more than it is to “develop” practices that work. Practices in the Latina/o community have existed for years and sometimes centuries and yet never documented, evaluated or studied formally. We define community-defined evidence as a set of practices that communities have used and determined to yield positive results as determined by community consensus over time and which may or may not have

## Community Defined Evidence

(Continued from page 9)

been measured empirically but have reached a level of acceptance by the community.

We see community defined evidence as alternative and supplement to, not a replacement of, ESTs and EBTs. By studying and defining community-based evidence and identifying community-defined practice criteria that yield positive results, the CDEP can influence research, practice, policy and funding to acknowledge and recognize alternative measurement methods to document what works in Latina/o communities. The specific goals of the CDEP are:

1) *To promote the use of culturally-informed methodologies and measurement practices with Latina/o populations, correcting practices which ultimately impact treatments, services and outcomes for Latino populations.* This in-

volves the use of participatory action research methods that include community members in the discovery of best practices, the design of methods to study the best practices as a group, the distilling of the “essential elements” (those com-

ponents of any given practice that are essential to yielding positive results and in common with other successful practices) and the development of measurement criteria from those essential elements that may prove useful in measuring or evaluating community defined evidence.

2) *To share the process, methodology, findings and lessons learned with the other ethnic/racial groups so that they may apply the valuable knowledge gained in the discovery of community-defined evidence in their communities.*

***“We see community defined evidence as alternative and supplement to, not a replacement of, ESTs and EBTs.”***

3) *To positively influence academicians/researchers, governmental entities, public and private funders to adopt the use of community-defined evidence criteria when addressing the needs of Latina/o populations in order to complement traditional top down approaches to empirical research.* Examples include requiring community defined evidence criteria, alongside EST/EBT criteria (randomized controlled trials) in Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and contract language, etc., so that funders/policy makers give



### The CDEP Community Steering Group

Including NLPA members Ken Martinez and I. David Acevedo-Polakovich

grantees the option of using community defined evidence as well as empirically derived practices to document practices that work in Latina/o communities. Ultimately, the CDEP seeks to positively impact Latina/o communities by

developing approaches that document the successful practices that they have developed over time, and that –under the current approach to behavioral healthcare- run the risk of being displaced by top-down ESTs and EBTs that often have no demonstrated ability to address the needs of Latina/o communities. As a complement to top-down ESTs and EBTs, community-defined evidence can enrich the behavioral healthcare landscape and constitutes an important step toward the elimination of service disparities in Latina/o and other culturally-diverse communities.

## Community Defined Evidence: Building Confidence in Our Science and Practice

Melanie M. Domenech Rodriguez, PhD and I. David Acevedo-Polakovich, PhD.

The Community Defined Evidence Project (CDEP) introduced by Martinez and colleagues in the previous article has come to fruition at a time when the use of existing Empirically Supported Treatments and Empirically Based Practices with US Latinas/Latinos and other culturally diverse groups is a matter of some debate. Some professionals stress the need for cultural adaptation, others call for tests of original interventions without any modifications, and still others argue for the creation of new, culturally-grounded, interventions. The CDEP presents yet another option, that Latinas/os and other culturally diverse groups may have their own ways of promoting and ensuring health and wellbeing, and that these are worthy of exploration. This article presents three arguments, originating from a professional and ethical perspective, that support the importance of the CDEP and similar efforts.

### *Argument 1: The Use of Multiple Methods of Research is Good for Science*

Scientific psychology engages in multiple ways of observing, including multiple methods of conducting research (e.g., survey, interview, live observations, archival data) as well as using multiple informants for observations (e.g., parent and teacher reports of child behaviors). As a discipline, our values suggest a preference for the use of multiple methods of data collection. The convergence of findings across multiple methods lends confidence to research conclusions, whereas divergence in findings results in discoveries of biases that lead to the refinement of methodologies and theories. Incorporating multiple methodologies (e.g., qualitative, including unstructured observations, interviews, etc.) provides a richness and depth to our

knowledge base. Because of its methodological heterogeneity, the CDEP stands to contribute significantly by providing one more piece in the proverbial puzzle involved in providing competent psychological services to Latinas/os.

### *Argument 2: Ethnic Minority Science is Good for Science*

When research is conducted with samples from a broad array of populations, the generalizability—and thereby the credence—of psychological principles and theories increases. Moreover, findings from research conducted with ethnic minorities can inform research and theories based on data from mainstream populations. This is especially relevant in intervention research, where efforts to tailor an intervention for optimal use with a particular population may result in observable and measurable changes to an intervention that could improve the original intervention (see Domenech Rodríguez & Wieling, 2004 for a theoretical model emphasizing this decentering process).

That interventions are empirically supported or empirically based does not mean that they are optimal or perfected treatments, it means they have met a set of criteria that supports their ability to produce a desired outcome. Examination of these interventions' properties using samples from culturally diverse populations, along with efforts at cultural adaptation or cultural tailoring, can lead to improved treatments for all populations (Sue, 1999). Findings from the CDEP could contribute knowledge to be used in future efforts of this kind.

(continued on page 12)

**(Building Confidence.** Continued from p. 11)

*Argument 3: Ethical Psychological Practice Requires an Integration of Cultural Considerations*

Both the *APA Ethics Code* (2002) and the *APA Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists* (2003) promote the consideration, inclusion, and integration of diversity in matters of research, practice, teaching, and training. Psychologists can only successfully accomplish this when there is an adequate knowledge base regarding the manner in which culture interacts with psychological phenomena. The CDEP, and projects like it, are promising and necessary mechanisms for the development of this knowledge base

***“Ultimately, the actual importance of the CDEP and similar research endeavors will depend on the strength and relevance of their findings”***

Ultimately, the actual importance of the CDEP and similar research endeavors will depend on the strength and relevance of their findings. What this analysis suggests, is that these approaches to research have significant potential to generate findings of importance for Latinas/os and other culturally diverse populations and of importance for psychology in general.

*Book Review*

## **Latina/o Healing Practices: Mestizo and Indigenous Perspectives**

*Brian W. McNeill and Joseph M. Cervantes (Eds.)*

With their new book, editors Brian McNeill and Joseph Cervantes set out to raise awareness about the various approaches to healing and wellbeing, many grounded in ancestral traditions, which play a vital role in the daily lived experiences of contemporary Latinas/os. In McNeill and Cervantes' view, psychologists and other health professionals who fail to recognize the importance of these approaches, and to respond accordingly, may be failing in an important domain of culturally competent ethical practice with Latinas/os.

To achieve their goal, McNeill and Cervantes brought together an interdisciplinary team of authors including psychologists, physicians, religious scholars, historians, nurses, anthropologists and traditional healers. As a result, the book offers a multilayered presentation of these approaches to wellbeing and their influence on contemporary Latinas/os, ranging from the strongly conceptual (e.g., the Epilogue's framing of these issues in terms of modern psychological research and practice) to the strongly experiential (e.g., Medina's account of a modern search for a Chicana spirituality in Chapter Eight).

The book is divided into three main sections followed by an epilogue. The three chapters that compose section one are each focused on one aspect of what the editors' call *Mestiza/o and Indigenous Perspectives*, and serve as a general conceptual introduction. In Chapter 1, Cervantes addresses the indigenous roots of contemporary Latina/o cultures and many of their healing practices, along with their implications for the

(continued on page 13)

## Book Review: Latina/o Healing Practices

(Continued from page 12)

healing professional. Chapter 2 is focused on the role of popular saints (including the Virgin Mary) in Latina/o cultures and conceptions of healing. Finally, Chapter 3 provides an orientation to the practice of Santería, a religion based on ancient Yoruba African rites, in both Cuba and the U.S. The book's second section, labeled *Indigenous and Mestiza/o Healing Practices*, moves more fully into the application of the concepts introduced in section one. Its chapters discuss the use of psychotropic herbal and natural medicines among contemporary Latinas/os (Chapter 4), introduce the various spiritual healing traditions prevalent in Brazil (Chapter 5), discuss and analyze a specific Santería practice known as "La Limpia de San Lázaro" (Chapter 6), and explore the coping functions of spirituality and religion among Latina/o college students (Chapter 7).

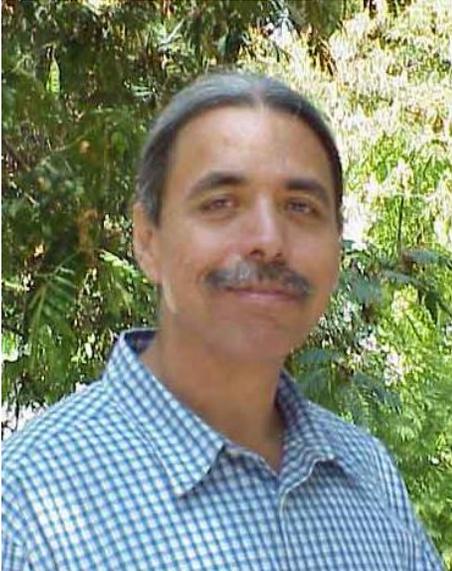
In general terms, the third section deals with the intersection and mutual influence of the various cultural forces that shape the healing practices and beliefs of contemporary Latinas/os. Chapter eight provides an experiential analysis of the quest to navigate these various cultural forces in the development of spiritual practices among contemporary Chicanas. Chapter nine is devoted to a comparison between religious and biomedical approaches to healing. Chapter ten introduces a model for the incorporation of the traditional practices of curanderismo into psychotherapy. In the epilogue, McNeill and Cervantes re-examine some of the main concepts presented throughout the volume and point to their implications for psychological research, practice, and the training of psychologists (and other mental health professionals).

Overall, the book's objectives seem well served by the strongly interdisciplinary and cross-methodological approach taken by the editors, which provides readers

with an adequately complex introduction to these approaches to wellbeing and their implications for mental health practice. However, it should be noted clearly that this book is not a concise step by step guide to incorporate indigenous or Mestiza/o healing into psychological practice and research, but rather a multilayered introduction to these approaches and their relevance to contemporary Latina/o psychology.

Throughout the book, the editors substantiate several important points. First, traditional approaches to healing are still very relevant among contemporary Latinas/os, and by extension should be relevant to the psychologists and other mental health professionals that serve them. Second, rather than static and nostalgic influences, these traditional approaches are key ingredients in active, dynamic, and ongoing constructions of healing and wellbeing among contemporary Latinas/os. Third, many -if not most- of these traditional approaches share important common healing factors with contemporary psychological practice and offer valuable scientific and professional insights into the healing and recovery processes. Finally, these traditional approaches may in fact offer something beneficial to the wellbeing of contemporary Latinas/os that is not salient in prevailing approaches to therapy and counseling and for this reason can help advance psychological science and practice. In the end, paraphrasing from a section in the editors' epilogue, *Latina/o Healing Practices* provides the necessary foundation for needed dialogue about the relevance of Mestiza/o and indigenous perspectives in the psychological wellbeing of contemporary Latians/os.

I. David Acevedo-Polakovich, PhD  
Central Michigan University

*Becoming a Latino Psychologist:***Jose Cervantes**

It was through the childhood teachings of my grandmother—an indigenous *Mazatec* from rural Mexico—that my introduction to the discipline of healing began. In her everyday life, my grandmother emphasized the important roles of the spirit, the interconnections among all things, and our responsibility for the well being of others. Beyond my grandmother’s teaching, my interest in traditional healing approaches grew every time I visited Doña Lencha, a local curandera who would treat problems large and small, including my frequent stomach illnesses.

My spiritual and personal growth continued as I both struggled with and benefited from the education provided by the nuns at the local Catholic school. At the time (1950s-1960s), discrimination, oppression, and racism were painfully evident realities in school and in my surrounding environment. Given this background, it is perhaps not surprising that—influenced by the example of my cousin’s enrollment in a Catholic seminary in Mexico- I decided to respond to the social injustice that I saw by pursuing a religious vocation and also enrolling in a Catholic seminary with the intention of becoming

ing a missionary priest.

At the age of twenty-one, after eight years of seminary training that included philosophy, theology, Latin, and various models of spiritual mentoring, I came to the decision that my path was elsewhere and left the seminary to pursue graduate school in psychology. Beyond the struggles and ensuing growth that all graduate students typically experience in psychology doctoral programs, I learned several things about my discipline in the 1970s:

- Psychological theory and practice did not know how to accommodate people of color, particularly Latinos;
- There were no available mentors to guide me;
- Models of cultural competence were non-existent;
- There was limited research to inform my growing awareness of practice issues with diverse Spanish speaking communities.

After completing my doctoral program, and prompted by all that I had learned in my seminary training, I became curious about the role of spirituality in counseling and psychotherapy. My need to understand this role was constantly fueled by my professional practice with Latinas/os, who—as a natural part of healing- often used religious and spiritual images, prayers, ritual, and discussions of a God or Creator during treatment. It was frustrating that at this time (i.e., the early 1980’s), there was little—if any- dialogue about God or spirituality within psychology, and—unsurprisingly- my graduate study had inadequately prepared me to be an ethical practitioner in this regard.

Since these early experiences, spirituality in clinical practice has been the blueprint to my work as a practicing

## Jose Cervantes

(Continued from page 14)

tioner and scholar, and has remained in the forefront through all of my professional activities over the last three decades. As a practitioner, I have been influenced by my three years of active duty service as an Air Force psychologist, five years as an administrator for a Child Guidance Center in Orange County, and the interweaving of part time teaching at the graduate level of a handful of universities in Southern California. The joint experiences of teaching at Pepperdine University and serving as the Director of clinical training for an APA approved clinical internship in Pediatric Psychology (Children's Hospital of Orange County) proved pivotal in my professional development and served to highlight service delivery inequities affecting disenfranchised populations. While teaching graduate students from privileged backgrounds in one of these roles, in my other role I was administering a training program housed in a Children's Hospital that catered to low income families from culturally diverse communities. This sharp contrast challenged the sense of social justice that I had developed throughout my lifetime, and eventually led me to leave Pepperdine.

It was while teaching at California State Fullerton that I learned to manage the social inequities that I felt responsible to address. The multi ethnic student population at this university has provided me rich opportunities to address ethnicity, culture, culturally competent service delivery, and the integration of spirituality into psychotherapy practice. Since arriving at Fullerton, I have enjoyed the privilege of being involved in important ethnic minority concerns at the local and national level. At the local level, I have been Ethics Chair for the Orange County Psychological Association and President of the Chicano/Latino Faculty and Staff As-

sociation at my university campus. At the national level, I have served as a member and chair of APA's Committee on Ethnic Minorities Affair and as President of the National Latina/o Psychological Association.

I am fortunate to be one among a growing community of scholars finally speaking about the important role of spirituality in healing and psychotherapy, particularly in communities of color. I have written about spirituality and psychotherapy with Latino children (Cervantes and Ramirez, 1992), spirituality with people of color (Cervantes and Parham, 2005), Mexican American families (Cervantes and Sweatt, 2004), the role of spirituality in Mexican American masculinity and fatherhood (Cervantes, 2008), the intersection of gender, culture, and spirituality (Passalacqua and Cervantes, 2008), and –most recently- Latina/o healing practices from Meztizo and Indigenous perspectives (Mc. Neil & Cervantes, 2008).

My grandmother's healing presence, and her stories about the interconnectedness of life, are still with me. I remember her when I am in consultation with clients and spirituality is a core part of their emotional well-being. My healing journey, like those of my clients, has created an inter-awareness of our therapeutic relationship, opportunities for prayer and reflection, and the ability –when faced with difficult life issues or dilemmas - to rely on a power greater than myself. For me, clinical practice with Spanish speaking populations is about navigating the various interconnections among an individual's spirit, emotions, and psychological life. It is my belief that this cultural reality must match our ethical responsibilities to respond with demonstrated knowledge, awareness and skill in each of the intersecting arenas of spirituality and psychology.

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## From the President Elect

Ed Deldgado-Romero, PhD



I write this column while watching the historic results of the US election, which make my impending presidency seem very small by comparison. At the same time, the enormity of the task is settling in. I am following the footsteps of giants: Patricia Arredondo, Azara Santiago-Rivera and Jose Cervantes. They have all given so much of themselves to NLPA, and left our organization even better when they passed our leadership to the next set of hands. Fortunately, I can count on their guidance. Looking forward to the next two years, there are important objectives we must accomplish:

1. We must keep current NLPA students involved as they become early career professionals. They are a strong base, and we need to help them become successful early career professionals.
2. We need to recruit more members. All of us have friends and colleagues that should be in NLPA, and who may have been meaning to join - but haven't. We need to help them join us.
3. We must strengthen our fundraising without compromising our accessible dues. For the upcoming convention, we raised over \$8,000 for student-focused programs and had 10 plane tickets donated

for student travel, but that's not enough: We need to raise more money to support students.

4. We need to creatively rethink our conference model to make it more affordable and less expensive.
5. We must take steps to continue developing as an organization: a journal, a formal seat on the APA council, a bigger treasury.
6. We need to reach and learn from our Latin American psychologist sisters and brothers.

We can get each of these things accomplished, but we must work together to do so. Please contact me ([edelgado@uga.edu](mailto:edelgado@uga.edu)) so we can talk about your role in helping us move NLPA forward.

## Recent Publications by NLPA Members

The recent publications of NLPA members are listed in this section as a service to the membership, and with the intent of facilitating the exchange of new information among Latina/o psychologists. All citations are provided directly by the authors. It is *El Boletín's* policy to include in this section all submissions by members that (1) have appeared in print since the last issue of *El Boletín*, and; (2) Can be best described as books, full chapters in edited books, or articles in peer-reviewed publications.

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## Advertisements

**Assistant Professor in Experimental/Psychology and Law (Tenure-track).** The Department of Psychology at Central Michigan University invites applications for a tenure-track Assistant Professor position effective August 2009. The successful candidate will join a department with 35 faculty members to support the Experimental Psychology Program. This program comprises 16 full-time faculty members and offers a doctoral degree in applied experimental psychology as well as a terminal master's degree in experimental psychology. Candidates should have a research program linking psychology and law that complements existing program faculty. Potential research interests include, but are not limited to, eyewitness testimony, eyewitness identification, jury decision-making, false confessions, and forensic interviewing. Evidence of success in securing external funding to support research and students is desired. Candidates must have a Ph.D. in psychology (although ABD will be considered), demonstrated teaching effectiveness, and interest in teaching psychology and law as well as introductory level courses in statistics and research methodology.

Send application letter, curriculum vita, publication reprints, and three letters of recommendation to Dr. Debra A. Poole, Chair, Psychology & Law

Search Committee, Department of Psychology Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, MI 48859. For further information contact Dr. Poole at [poole1da@cmich.edu](mailto:poole1da@cmich.edu). Consideration of applications will begin November 1, 2008.

Serving more than 27,000 students, Central Michigan University is a doctoral research university recognized for strong undergraduate education and a range of focused graduate and research programs.

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**Cognitive Psychology (Tenure-track, Assistant Professor).** The Central Michigan University Psychology Department invites applications for a tenure track assistant professor position in cognitive psychology effective 8/09. The successful candidate will be joining a department with 35 faculty to support a large undergraduate program as well as the Experimental Program that offers a Ph.D. degree in applied experimental psychology and a master's degree in experimental psychology. Teaching responsibilities include both undergraduate and graduate courses, especially Learning and Memory and Cognitive Psychology. Additional needed courses include Introduction to Psychology and Re-

search Methods. A commitment to quality teaching and evidence of scholarship is required. A Ph.D. in psychology at the time of appointment is preferred, although ABD will be considered. The area of research within cognitive psychology is open; both basic and applied researchers are encouraged to apply. Preference will be given to candidates whose research has good potential for attracting external funding.

Serving more than 27,000 students, Central Michigan University is an innovative doctoral/research university recognized for strong undergraduate education and a range of focused graduate programs and research. Send application letter, curriculum vita, publication reprints, and three letters of recommendation to: Dr. Hajime Otani, Psychology Department, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859. For further information contact Dr. Otani at [otani1h@cmich.edu](mailto:otani1h@cmich.edu). Consideration of applications will begin November 1, 2008, and continue until the position is filled. CMU, an AA/EO institution, is strongly and actively committed to increasing diversity within its community (see [www.cmich.edu/aaeo/](http://www.cmich.edu/aaeo/)).

## De Salida

*From the Editor*

Honoring one of the important roots of our contemporary Latina/o cultures, NLPA's 2008 Distinguished Professional Early Career Award winner, Dr. Lisa Flores, crafted one of the most gracious acceptance speeches I've had the honor to witness around the Zulu communal concept of *Ubuntu*, which loosely translates as "I am because you are." In doing so, Lisa elegantly captured a core reason that NLPA earns the dedication of so many of its members: The genuine support and interconnectedness among members of our professional *familia*.

Reflecting our recent biennial, this issue focused on the role that our cultural roots play in contemporary Latina/o conceptions of wellbeing and healing. *Ubuntu*, and other communal ideas, are certainly a part of these conceptions for many contemporary Latinas/os who perceive personal and collective health as being closely interrelated if not mutually dependant. As was repeated throughout our biennial, and in the current issue: Professional ethics, scientific integrity, and the purely pragmatic concerns of everyday practice necessitate a closer examination of the roles that our cultural heritages and their modern manifestations play in the wellbeing of contemporary Latinas/os.

It is uplifting to learn about the work and accomplishments of up and coming scholars (like Irene López, p.6), graduate students (like Michelle Cruz-Santiago and Kristine Molina, p.5), and entire collectives of Latina/o mental health stakeholders (see article on CDEP beginning on p.8) who are making great strides toward ensuring that psychological practice with contemporary Latinas/os does not become one more tool in the historical arsenal of colonialism. It is inspiring to be educated on the successful struggles of our elders, such as José Cervantes (p.14), upon whose strong foundations we build.

It is fair to say that the spirit of *Ubuntu* is foremost on my mind when editing each issue of *El Boletín*. I hope to reflect it in our stories, content, features, and even the language we use in this publication. Without each other, this fantastic organization would simply cease to be. In the spirit of *Ubuntu*, I would like to publicly thank and acknowledge the many NLPA members without whose contributions this issue would not be: Roy Aranda PsyD, Linda Castillo PhD, José Cervantes PhD, Michelle Cruz-Santiago, Ed Delgado-Romero PhD, Melanie Domenech-Rodríguez PhD, Elena Flores PhD, Irene López PhD, Ken Martinez PsyD, Marie Miville PhD, Kristine Molina, Eduardo Morales PhD, Rebecca Rangel MA, and Michelle Silva PsyD. Like them, every member of our NLPA family is invited to contribute to *El Boletín* by sharing stories, announcements, etc. that may be of interest to the membership and are aligned with an upcoming topical focus. Members who would like to become even more involved in the preparation of our newsletter are encouraged to please contact me directly at [david.acevedo@cmich.edu](mailto:david.acevedo@cmich.edu).

I continue to hope that issue, and each issue of *El Boletín*, informs our NLPA familia, helps foster relationships among us, inspires us with a sense of "sí se puede," and provides at least a piece of a roadmap for how to continue developing together as successful, competent, **Latina/o** psychologists.

I am because you are.

I. David Acevedo-Polakovich, PhD  
Editor

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