

# El Boletín

The Newsletter of the National Latina/o Psychological Association

## From the President-Elect

*Emerging Latina Research*



I am pleased to write the President's message for this issue. First, I would like to share how wonderful it was to see many of you in San Antonio. It was a phenomenal conference! Many thanks to our current president, Ed Delgado-Romero, and the Planning committee for organizing it. The Executive Committee has already begun discussing the 2012 NLPA Biennial. We hope to share the dates and selected city within the next few months.

I am also pleased to share that NLPA has partnered with the American Psychological Association and will be establishing the *Journal of Latina/o Psychology*. The Executive Committee has appointed Azara Santiago-Rivera to serve as the Journal's first editor, as she played a key role in negotiating the contract with APA and has the impressive credentials needed

for such an important role. Azara will work with the past presidents in establishing the editorial board and the related journal policies and procedures.

In the next month, we will start developing Special Interest Groups (SIGs) within NLPA. The Executive committee has approved the SIG application and established procedures for developing these groups. This initiative will create an opportunity for members to collaborate around their particular shared interests. Once the call is released on the listserv, please consider developing a SIG. Speaking of the listserv, we have repopulated it to only include members in good standing. Please remember to renew your membership at [www.nlpa.ws](http://www.nlpa.ws), as your presence and support is critical to NLPA and its mission.

Lastly, over the next year the Executive committee will be engaging in extensive strategic planning, so that we can start to prioritize our initiatives and adequately fund them. As we move forward with this process, I leave you with this question: Where would you like to see NLPA be five years from now? Send me an email at [fuentesm@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:fuentesm@mail.montclair.edu) with

your answers, so that we can consider your thoughts, as we engage in this important and exciting process. As I noted in my Presidential-Elect address at the conference, **we are ready** to take the next decisive steps to promote and advance Latina/o Psychology!

Enjoy the Spring and the sense of renewal that accompanies it!

Milton A. Fuentes, Psy.D.

Associate Professor  
Montclair State University

President Elect  
National Latina/o  
Psychological Association

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## Noticias

### NLPA events and Accomplishments

#### ACHIEVEMENTS

**Celebrating NLPA's Distinguished Members.** During our recent biennial in San Antonio, we recognized the winners of our association's professional and student awards.

*NLPA's Distinguished Professional Career Award*, conferred upon a psychologist whose contributions have advanced an agenda congruent with NLPA's mission, was given to **Dr.**

**Lillian Comas-Díaz**, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at George Washington University School of Medicine, Executive Director of Transcultural Mental Health Institute, and a psychologist with an active practice in Washington, D.C.. Dr. Comas-Díaz was honored for

her many years of work on behalf of Latino/a psychology. Her scholarly work has advanced knowledge in psychology concerning Latina/o Americans, and her work has had a substantial impact on the profession's understanding of the needs and strengths of this population.

**Dr. Angela Londoño-McConnell**, a psychologist, organizational consultant and co-owner of AK Counseling and Consulting, Inc. in Athens, GA, received the *Star Vega Distinguished*

*Service Award*. This award is conferred upon a psychologist who has distinguished her or himself through service to the Latino/a community and is named in honor and memory of Dr. Star Vega. Dr. Londoño-McConnell has been a strong advocate in advancing the interests of the Latina/o community through her work with clients, her service to campus communities, her perseverance in advancing institutional and societal awareness and



**Drs. Comas-Díaz, Londoño-McConnell, and Edwards.**

knowledge of the Latino/a community, and by serving as an agent of social justice to promote the welfare of Latinas/os. Her advocacy has been highlighted in several local and state publications as well as in national and international publications, including CNN, ABC News, NPR/Georgia Public Radio, BBC Radio, Univision, and the APA Monitor.

The *Distinguished Professional Early Career Award* is conferred upon an early career psychologist (10 years or

less since earning a doctoral degree) whose contributions have advanced an agenda congruent with NLPA's mission. **Dr. Lisa M. Edwards**, Assistant Professor in the Department of Counselor Education and Counseling at Marquette University, was honored for her scholarship, training, and mentoring in advancing Latina/o psychology. Dr. Edwards uses a strength-based approach to investigate personal and cultural factors related to Latino/a adolescents' health and well-being. Her research has also contributed to the understanding of psychology through a feminist and multicultural lens that considers multiracial clients in therapy, supervisor issues, and multicultural training. This early

career scholar has published 24 journal articles, 8 encyclopedia entries, 10 book chapters and delivered over 80 conference presentations. Her work has appeared in well-regarded journals in the field.

**Marina Valdez**, a doctoral candidate at the University of Oregon, received the *Cynthia de las Fuentes Dissertation Award*. This award is given to a student whose dissertation is currently in progress and whose work focuses

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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 emerging Latina research. Topical coverage begins on page 6.

The opinions expressed in all articles appearing in *El Boletín* are those of their authors and may not reflect the positions of the National Latina/o Psychological Association or its members.

## Noticias

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on issues related to Latina/o psychology theory, research, or practice. Under the direction of Dr. Ellen McWhirter, Ms. Valdez has designed a project that investigates the feminist and ethnic identities and safe sex practices among Latinas between the ages of 18 and 25. Her use of the internet and social networking for her data collection and her strong clinical background are both factors that enhanced the design and focus of her dissertation.

The *NLPA Outstanding Dissertation Award*, given to a member who has defended her or his dissertation study since the prior NLPA biennial and whose project was evaluated as an exceptional contribution to Latina/o psychology, was awarded to **Nallely Galván**. Dr. Galván recently completed her doctoral studies in counseling psychology at the University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign under the direction of Drs. Lydia Buki and Helen Neville. Her dissertation project, *“Experiences of Ethnic-Related Discrimination and their Influence on the Health of Mexican Immigrants”*, addresses a critical social concern that is consistent with the mission of NLPA. The study was conducted entirely in Spanish and yielded data that can inform not only theory but also practice with Mexican immigrants, a medically underserved and marginalized population.

Finally, **Dianna M. Gonzalez** received the *Distinguished Student Service Award*. The award is given to a graduate student who has made outstanding service contributions to the U.S. Latino/a community. Ms. Gonzalez is a doctoral student at New Mexico State University. She is an active participant in multicultural and so-

cial justice dialogue within her training program, and has advocated for the improvement of bilingual training opportunities for students and faculty. She also has advocated for the development of practicum and field placements where Latina/o community members can receive reduced or free services, and she developed a field placement at a local center known for providing services to Latinas/os, many of whom are immigrants and/or from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. We congratulate each of these award recipients for their work and the impact that they are making in Latino/a psychology and in the lives of Latina/os in our communities.

The 2010 NLPA Awards Committee was chaired by Lisa Y. Flores and made up of the following 2008 NLPA Award recipients: Azara Santiago-Rivera, Jeanett Castellanos, Alejandro Morales, Tiffany Schiffner, and Henry Acosta.

**Early Career? NLPA’s Recent PhDs Shine.** Francisco Sánchez, PhD, NLPA member and co-coordinator of the *2011 National Multicultural Conference and Summit*, re-



**Francisco Sánchez, PhD**

ceived the 2010 *Chancellor’s Award for Post-Doctoral Research* from the *University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA)*. This award, the highest that can be bestowed upon post-doctoral scholars at UCLA, recognized Dr. Sánchez’ research and scholarship on the biopsychological basis of gender identity and sexual orientation. Dr. Sánchez’ was also elected to Fellow Status by the *American Psychological Association’s Council of Representatives*.



**Irene López, PhD**

Other NLPA early career members also continue to build on their already impressive record of accomplishments. Dr. Irene López, a faculty member at Ohio’s *Kenyon College*, was awarded that institution’s *Harvey F. Lodish Faculty Development Endowed Chair in the Natural Sciences* (2010-2013). The award recognizes Dr. López’ excellence in teaching, research, and scholarship in the natural sciences. Dr. López and Dr. Sánchez serve as remarkable examples of the many ways in which NLPA members are meeting and exceeding the traditional standards of early career success.

## Noticias

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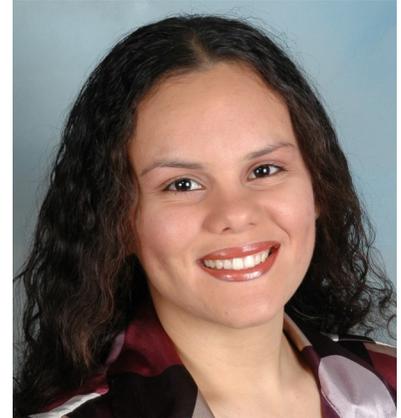
**NLPA Members Online: New Blogs About Diversity, Life, and Professional Development.** NLPA members are at the forefront as the online presence of Latinas/os and other diverse groups continues to grow. Over the past year, NLPA members I. David Acevedo-Polakovich, PhD, Shannon Chavez-Korell, PhD, and David Rivera, MS, have been involved in the launching of two important blogs that address the intersection of psychology, diversity, life, and professional development. Representing a joint effort by NLPA and the *Section on the Clinical Psychology of Ethnic Minorities* (Section VI of APA's Division 12, the Society of Clinical Psychology), doctors Chavez-Korell and Acevedo-Polakovich have launched <http://multiculturalmentoring.blogspot.com>, a blog that shares professional development advice with psychology students and early career professionals

who are interested in diversity. The blog features guest entries by noted multicultural psychologists with a wide variety of backgrounds and interests.

NLPA Student David Rivera, who's other recent professional successes are highlighted elsewhere in this issue, has started a blog on the *Psychology Today* website. The blog, *Microaggressions in Everyday Life*, is co-hosted with Mr. Rivera's graduate school mentor, Dr. Derald Wing Sue, and can be accessed at: <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life>. The blog features informed discussion of microaggressions and their role in everyday life. By creating content that is relevant and important for Latinas/os and other diverse groups, Mr. Rivera, Dr. Chavez-Korell, and Dr. Acevedo-Polakovich exemplify the way in which NLPA members can help close the digital divide.

## NLPA Students Earn

**Recognition.** Continuing a tradition of success among NLPA students, Michelle Cruz-Santiago and David Rivera recently received recognition for



**Michelle Cruz-Santiago, MA**

their work and contributions. Ms. Cruz-Santiago, who's success in obtaining funding was highlighted in an earlier issue of *El Boletín*, received a new grant in support of her work from the

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## Member Spotlight: Roy Aranda, PsyD, JD:

As an applied psychologist with expertise in forensic psychology, clinical psychology, and neuropsychology, Dr. Roy Aranda is ideally prepared to work at the crossroads between psychology and law. In addition to being the New York State Psychological Association's Council Representative to Nassau County Psychological Association, Dr. Aranda is the Secretary of the Forensic Division of the New York State Psychological Association and of the Long Island Hispanic Bar Association. Dr. Aranda is also on the Editorial Board of the National Hispanic Bar Association's newsletter, *Noticias*.

Dr. Aranda uses his combined expertise in applied psychology, Latina/o cultures, and law to advance important issues. One recent effort, in collaboration with his colleague Jeffrey Singer, Ph.D., is a presentation on diagnostic issues and problems in assessing sex offenders in civil commitment proceedings\*. On this issue, Dr. Aranda comments, among many other abuses "I have seen Spanish-dominant individuals evaluated by state experts who barely speak Spanish and relied on dictionaries while performing the evaluation through video teleconference ... Needless to say, this neither benefits the sex offender who needs treatment nor society."

\* Dr. Aranda's presentation will be delivered to the New York State Psychological Association Forensic Division and invitees at a conference on April 28, 2011.

## Noticias

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*Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues* (Division 9 of APA). This grant further supports her research examining the pre-college experiences of low income Latinos who enroll in college. Ms. Cruz-Santiago's work promoting academic success among Latina/o and African American students was also recognized by the *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*, who selected her as the sole student recipient of its *Campus Award for Excellence in Public Engagement*. This award recognized her success at integrating service, teaching, research, and scholarship.



**David Rivera, MS**

David Rivera, a doctoral candidate in counseling psychology at *Teachers College*, received the travel award offered jointly by the *Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues* (Division 44 of APA) and the *Ethics Committee of the APA*. This award, conferred to students conveying excellence in their understanding of the intersections between ethics and diversity, facilitated Mr. Rivera's participation in the *2011 National Multicultural Conference and Summit*. Mr. Rivera and Ms. Cruz-Santiago exemplify the dedication, commitment, and success of NLPA's student membership.

**NLPA Leaders Continue with Success.** The *Asociación Gay Unida Impactando Latinos/Latinas A Superarse (AGUILAS)*, an organization directed by NLPA distinguished career awardee Dr.



**Eduardo Morales, PhD**

Eduardo Morales, recently received a \$100,000 dollar grant from the *Levis Strauss Foundation*. The grant will allow AGUILAS to continue providing leadership and advocacy for Latina/o LGBT issues including training and an annual conference.

Melanie Domenech-Rodriguez, PhD, who in 2007 received the *Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues* (division 45 of APA) *Emerging Professional Award*, has recently

been accepted as a fellow of that same organization. The ongoing success of Dr. Domenech-Rodriguez



**Melanie Domenech, PhD**

and Dr. Morales highlight the important contributions that NLPA's established professionals continue to make.

## MILESTONES

### Awarded

**Michelle Cruz-Santiago, MA**, the *Campus Award for Excellence in Public Engagement* from the *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*.

**Melanie Domenech-Rodriguez, PhD**, *Fellow Status* by the *Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues*.

**Irene Lopez, PhD**, *Kenyon College's Harvey F. Lodish Faculty Development Endowed Chair in the Natural Sciences*.

**Francisco Sanchez, PhD**, *Fellow Status* by the *American Psychological Association* and the *Chancellor's Award for Post-Doctoral Research* from *UCLA*.

### Transitioned

**Veronica Bordes-Edgar, PhD**, to *Pediatric Neuropsychologist* at *Phoenix Children's Hospital*.

**Miguel Ángel Cano, MPH, MS**, to *Postdoctoral Fellow* in the *Department for Health Disparities Research* at the *University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center*.

## CALENDAR

**October 28-29, 2011. The ISPRC 2011 Diversity Challenge: Intersections of Race or Culture and Gender or Sexual Orientation.** Held at *Boston College*, this conference includes panel discussion/symposia, workshops, structured discussions, a poster session, and individual presentations by invited experts and selected guests including educators, administrators, researchers, mental health professionals, and community organizations. More information can be found at the ISPRC website, <http://www.bc.edu/schools/lsoe/isprc/dc2011.html>

## From the Editor: An Introduction to this Issue, and an *hasta luego*.

I. David Acevedo-Polakovich, PhD; Central Michigan University

In this issue of *El Boletín* we reflect our recent biennial by highlighting the work of three of our active members—a graduate student, an early career psychologist, and an established leader in our field—each of whom has focused much of their attention to issues facing Latinas. In the first of these pieces, Dr. Ana A. Baumann, a post-doctoral researcher at Washington University in Saint Louis (and previous contributor to *El Boletín*), shares with us the results of important new research that documents the crucial role of mothers and *familia* in the mental health of young Latinas. The next article highlights the work of another previous contributor to *El Boletín*, Cynthia A. Guzmán, who is a doctoral candidate at New Mexico State University. Ms. Guzman’s work focuses on developing approaches to assessing *marianismo* that can document the strengths and assets of contemporary Latinas alongside the challenges they continue to face.

In the final piece of this topical section, *El Boletín*’s incoming editor—Dr. Manuel X. Zamarripa—provides us with a biographical insight into the life and accomplishments of one of our most important leaders and role models, Dr. Melba Vasquez. Because she has exercised courage and determination before us, there is a path marked that we can follow and many more open doors along the way. Dr. Vasquez’ focus on the importance of her early family experiences brings the section full circle by providing a powerful illustration of the family effects documented by Dr. Baumann and her colleagues.

When I analyze the important role that NLPAs has played my professional life (and mental health), I cannot but be grateful and indebted for the incredible support, mentorship, and camaraderie of so many wonderful Latina psychologists. As our former early career standouts become established members of our profession, the future of this association will be in the capable hands of colleagues like doctors Lisa Flores, Lydia Buki, Melanie Domenech, Linda Castillo, Yvette Tazeau and so many others. Under their leadership, the future of this association promises to be incredible.

An incredible occurrence in my own near future and that of my partner of over 14 years is the birth of our first child: Catalina or Ignacio, we look forward to the surprise. Sometime close to the day you read this article, our priority will become providing our child with the type of *familia* that Dr. Baumann’s work tells us is so important. I hope we can be the type of *familia* that helped Melba Vasquez believe her efforts could make important and needed change.

Another thing that will happen on that day is that Manuel Zamarripa will go from being Incoming Editor to Editor “*a secas*.” I wish him well and hope that he will experience the type of exciting, promising, NLPAs that I got to experience. *De salida*, I want to thank all of you for coming along (or putting up) with me during my stint as editor. My goal with each issue was to provide us with a newsletter that reflected the strength of our association and guided us all along in the direction of success and competence as **Latina/o** psychologists. I hope that is what you found when you picked up *El Boletín*.

Thankful, appreciative, and indebted,

I. David Acevedo-Polakovich, PhD  
Department of Psychology, Central Michigan University  
**Outgoing** Editor

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## Preventing Latinas' Suicide: The Role of *Familia*

Ana A. Baumann, PhD; Washington University in Saint Louis

Although most U.S. Latina/o adolescents are satisfied with their lives and optimistic about their futures (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009), an alarming proportion of Latina teenagers—about 15%—report attempting suicide, a rate that is far higher than those observed in other U.S. ethnic groups (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, 2008). With the goals of understanding and addressing the factors that influence suicide attempts among Latina teens, my collaborative research has focused on the role of the family as both a protective factor and a risk factor.

At its core, familism refers to a strong sense of identification with, and attachment to, one's family, where family members show strong feelings of loyalty, reciprocity, and solidarity amongst themselves (Losada et al., 2006; Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, & Maria, 1987). Although it is not unique to Latinas/os (Holub, Tomiyama, Su, Wang, & Chaudhary, 2006), familism has been characterized as a central tenet of Latino culture (Zinn, 1982).

There is a long tradition of research documenting the positive effects of familism on Latina adolescents' behaviors (e.g., Sabogal et al., 1987; Marsiglia, Parsai, & Kulis, 2009); however, this research has usually focused on individuals' (i.e., teens or parents) feelings of familism, rarely evaluating the differences and similarities between adolescents and their parents (Baumann, Kulhberg, & Zayas, 2010). A focus on family patterns provides important insights into suicide attempts among Latinas. For example, one of our recent studies documented that differences in familism between Latina adolescents and their mothers were associated with less relational closeness and, more importantly, that this relational closeness predicted reduced mental health which in turn predicted suicide attempts (Bauman et al., 2010).

Our findings are consistent with other emerging research pointing to an important role of family relationship patterns in predicting the likelihood that a Latina teen will attempt suicide. In a study comparing the families of over 100 U.S. Latina teenagers who had attempted suicide to those of more than 100 of their peers who had not, Peña et al. (in press) found that tight-knit families (those with high cohesion and low conflict) were significantly less likely to have teens that attempted suicide than intermediate-knit families or loose-knit families. When Gulbas et al. (in press) conducted qualitative interviews with a subsample

***“By focusing on familia, Latina/o psychologists might be able to reduce the concerning number of suicide attempts among our community’s teenagers.”***

of families in Peña et al.'s research, they found that the families of suicide attempters tended to have relationships that were either asymmetrical (i.e., where there is little reciprocity in family relationships) or detached (i.e., where there is little commitment or respect among family members). On the other hand, the families of non-attempters were mostly characterized by relationships where family members were actively invested in the wellbeing of the family.

Taken as a whole, this emerging body of research examining relational and belief patterns within U.S. Latina/o families suggests that family dynamics, and in particular mother-daughter relationships, are vital to the mental health of Latina teens. These results build on the long tradition of familism research by pointing out that—where the mental health of teenagers is concerned—the patterns of familistic beliefs and behaviors within a family might be of greater importance than the familism of any individual family member's. By focusing on *familia*, Latina/o psychologists might be able to reduce the concerning number of suicide attempts among our community's teenagers.

## Stepping out of the Box: *Marianismo* Redefined

Cynthia E. Guzmán, M.A., LMHC; New Mexico State University

Gender relations are not a static construction, but instead evolve and change with the conditions of women's lives, and over the life span of each woman (Ehlers, 1999). Despite the growing psychological understanding of the lives of some women in our society, the literature on *marianismo*—a construct of critical importance to the lives of Latinas—has been slow to evolve. The psychological literature on Latinas seems disproportionately focused on their problems rather than their strengths or assets (e.g., Amaro & Russo, 1987; Navarro, 2002). It is not uncommon to read how Latinas are deferring their educational and career goals to appease their husband's idea of what they should be doing (e.g., Gil & Vazquez, 1996) or how Latinas are fulfilling their parent's expectations of them rather than what they want for themselves (e.g., Arredondo, 2002). Although these realities are well documented in the literature, little attention is given to the strength and leadership of many Latinas that many of us have experienced directly (for an illustrative example, refer to the article on the very next page of this issue).

Countless Latinas are breaking out of the traditional molds described in the scholarly literature and little attention is given to them (e.g., Amaro, Russo, 1987). Latinas are in the workforce, on our college campuses, and are mothers who are very much successful without compromising their core cultural values (e.g., Comas-Diaz, 1988, Guzmán & Navarro, 2009). By disproportionately focusing on Latinas' problems, the psychological literature inadvertently helps to maintain a stereotype of Latinas as living in pathological and maladaptive contexts (e.g., Amaro & Russo, 1987). Latinas are powerful, influential, and empowered, even if at times this means deferring their own goals for the benefit of others.

In an effort to facilitate a psychological scholarship that can also document the positive aspects of Latinas' experience, I am working to develop a new scale to measure *marianismo*, the Guzmán Marianismo Inventory. This inventory is focused on reflecting the gender role construct of *marianismo* from a broader perspective than has traditionally been reflected in psychological scholarship. The inven-

tory measures *marianismo* from two distinct, yet complementary, theoretical orientations (traditional and feminist theological models). Specifically, the inventory reflects both the *traditional marianista* qualities and also the *service leadership* quality of a "new world" Latina. Traditional *marianismo* reflects the established view that Latinas behave in ways that ultimately emulate the spiritual strength and servitude of the Virgin Mary, thus facilitating behaviors such as self-sacrifice and deference to others (e.g., Stevens, 1973).

The traditional subscale of the instrument highlights these well-known dimensions of *marianismo* and also the Latino cultural value of *familismo*. In her paper about Puerto Rican women, Comas-Diaz (1988) illustrates how *hembrismo* could essentially describe the working *marianista*. She described the unique complexity of Puerto Rican women and their role in the community. The *service leadership* subscale in the GMI speaks to this duality. The term service leadership is widely talked about in the business literature (e.g., Greenleaf, 1970), but its presence in the psychosocial literature is thin (Guzman & Navarro, 2009). This *service leadership* subscale of the GMI expands the definition of *marianismo* by reflecting a view of Latinas as leading in their families and communities through active service.

By reflecting Latinas' positive role as servant-leaders, the Guzmán Marianismo Inventory provides a tool to begin documenting Latinas strengths and assets, and the valuable roles they play in their communities. The inventory may also be the catalyst to new conversations about negotiating roles and managing the inevitable inner conflict that arises from such a "new and old world" battle. To truly capture the essence of Latinas today, and thereby be of true service, we must expand our understanding of who they are.

**Note:** The GMI is currently being validated on a Latina samples across the U.S. and Puerto Rico. To obtain more information on the inventory, please contact Cynthia E. Guzmán at [cynгуzman@gmail.com](mailto:cynгуzman@gmail.com).

***"To truly capture the essence of Latinas today ... we must expand our understanding of who they are."***

## Becoming a Latina Psychologist: Melba Vasquez

by Manuel X. Zamarripa, PhD; Texas A&M –Corpus Christi

As a leader, ethicist, and mentor, Dr. Melba Vasquez has undoubtedly contributed to psychology. The current president of the American Psychological Association—and first woman of color to hold this prestigious position—has been instrumental in advancing our understanding of the interplay between diversity and psychology, particularly in the area of professional ethics. Her example of leadership, commitment, service, mentorship and scholarship has earned her a special place in the hearts of many within our NLPAs *familia*.

As a first-generation college student, Dr. Vasquez did not initially consider the pursuit of a doctoral degree. However, the sense of advocacy and social responsibility that she learned from her parents would eventually propel her in this direction. During her childhood in the small community of San Marcos (Texas), Dr. Vasquez' parents—who were original members of the local American GI Forum—would often take her and the rest of the family door-to-door to help register voters. Dr. Vasquez' mother was the first Latina elected to the school board in San Marcos. When, during high school, Dr. Vasquez and her friends noticed that ethnic minority students were not represented in school leadership positions, they believed it was their personal responsibility to change this situation. One could argue that her life as a trail blazing leader began when she was elected as class officer and student council representative. Of these formative experiences, Dr. Vasquez comments “I believe that I am lucky to come from a small Latino/Latina community that had a strong belief in supporting its young people to achieve in education. The evidence-based values of *familia* and *per-*



Melba Vasquez, PhD

*sonalismo* that I grew up with have facilitated an orientation to seeking and providing support, networking and mentoring.”

It was during her first career as a middle-school English and political science teacher that Dr. Vasquez developed an interest in counseling and decided to pursue a master's degree at the University of Texas at Austin. While completing her master's program, she was encouraged by a professor to continue on to the doctorate, a direction she saw as an appealing opportunity to study and understand how and why people engage in the type of discrimination she experienced directly. Upon receiving her Ph.D., Dr. Vasquez worked both as practicing psychologist and faculty member until 1991, when she opted for full-time independent practice in Austin, Texas.

Throughout her career, Dr. Vasquez has been involved as a leader within the American Psychological Association. She was centrally involved in the establishment of APA's division 45, the Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues, and of the National Multicultural Conference and Summit. A central feature of Dr. Vasquez' approach to leadership is a focus on mentorship, which arises from the example of family, professionals, and other colleagues. Mentoring all women, including Latinas, is particularly important. Dr. Vasquez states, “Latinas and other women of color still have to deal with sexism and racism. Those forces affect our own levels of confidence as well as the expectations of others around us.”

Throughout her career, Melba Vasquez has consistently pushed through barriers and often unacknowledged boundaries that limited, even denied, the voice of women of

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## Melba Vazquez

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color in psychology. As she has done so, she has demonstrated exceptional persistence, a strong belief in taking important risks, and an ability to remain flexible. Dr. Vasquez connects both her accomplishments and her strengths to her background and personal history, “my strong identity as a Latina has empowered me to try harder, work harder, and persist in attaining goals.” Reflecting the early lessons learned from her family, Dr. Vasquez has made sure to open doors for others as she has experienced her own successes. Her legacy is one that has both

broadly impacted psychology in general and elevated psychological recognition of the importance of diversity in research and practice in particular. As president of the American Psychological Association, Dr. Vasquez has continued on her remarkable path by enacting initiatives to address immigration, and preventing both discrimination and educational disparities. Although her presidency represents an historic moment in the history of psychology, it is clear that Melba Vasquez will continue to significantly shape the field of psychology for years to come.

### EMERGING LATINA RESEARCH: REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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## 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 been published 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.

### Peer-Reviewed Articles

- Cardemil, E.V., Kim, S., Davidson, T.M., Sarmiento, I., Ishikawa, R., Sanchez, M., & Torres, S. (2010). Developing a culturally appropriate depression prevention program: Opportunities and challenges. *Special issue of Cognitive & Behavioral Practice, 17*, 188-197.
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- Rivera, F., López, I., Ramirez, R., Guarnaccia, P., Canino, G., & Bird, H. A tale of two cities: Discrimination and antisocial behaviors in Puerto Rican children in two different contexts. (2010). *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*. doi: 10.1007/s10903-010-9421-x
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## Recent Publications by NLPA Members

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### Peer-Reviewed Articles (Continued)

- Sánchez, F. J., & Vilain, E. (2010). Genes and brain sex differences. In I. Savic-Berglund (Ed.), *Progress in brain research* (vol. 186) (pp. 65–76). New York: Elsevier. doi: 10.1016/B978-0-444-53630-3.00005-1
- Sánchez, F. J., Westefeld, J. S., Liu, W. M., & Vilain, E. (2010). Masculine gender role conflict and negative feelings about being gay. *Professional Psychology: Research & Practice*, 41, 104–111. doi: 10.1037/a0015805
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### Chapters

- López, I., Dent, T., Ecosto, E, & Prado-Steiman, M. (2010). Theories of acculturation and cultural identity. In A. Zigelbaum & J. Carlson (Eds.). *Working with Immigrant Families: A Practical Guide for Counselors*. Routledge Press.
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