

1877

HSI ADVISORY COUNCIL

REGIS UNIVERSITY is proud to be a federally designated Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) under Title V of the Higher Education Act. Just over 10 percent of all colleges and universities in the U.S. – more than 570 – are HSIs.

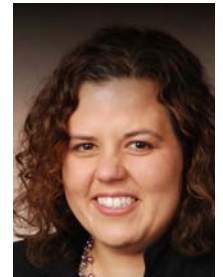
The HSI designation represents the University's progress in becoming a more diverse institution, representing the demographics of the larger community while also acknowledging the work required to become more inclusive in serving our students.

This designation provides Regis with opportunities to support initiatives that will shape a more accessible, inclusive, and culturally enhancing educational experience for Hispanic students, and in doing so will create a campus that honors and serves all students, no matter what their background is.

HSI designation, designed by national Hispanic leaders to reduce structural and historic inequities, denotes that a university's student enrollment is more than 25 percent Hispanic – 28 percent of full-time undergraduate Regis students are Hispanic – and affirms this university's commitment to serve, support and celebrate our diverse student body. HSIs enroll over two-thirds of all Hispanic undergraduates and 30.5 percent of all undergraduates in non-profit colleges. Hispanic enrollment in higher education is expected to exceed 4 million students by 2026, far surpassing the growth rate of any other racial-ethnic group by over 10 percent.

The University received the official designation in 2023 and is now developing comprehensive plans to enhance the individual and collective support of its students by embracing the many opportunities available as an HSI.

MICHELLE A. BARRON



Professor of Medicine,

Division of Infectious Diseases University of Colorado

Senior Medical Director,

Denver School of Medicine; UCHealth Infection Prevention and Control

BIO

Dr. Michelle Barron received a B.S. from Yale University in 1992. She went on to receive her medical degree from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in 1996. She completed her internship and residency in internal medicine at Creighton University School of Medicine from 1996 to 1999. From 1999 to 2003, Dr. Barron completed her training in infectious diseases at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. She joined the faculty at the University of Colorado School of Medicine in 2003 and is currently a Professor of Medicine in the Division of Infectious Diseases and an Adjunct Professor of Medicine in the Department of Epidemiology in the Colorado School of Public Health.

In addition, she is the Senior Medical Director of Infection Prevention for UCHealth. Dr. Barron played an integral role in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic response for the UCHealth system. She is board-certified in Internal Medicine as well as in Infectious Diseases. Dr. Barron's research interests are in infection prevention and control, transplant infectious diseases and HIV.

What inspires you to be a part of the Regis HSI Community Advisory Group?

I grew up in a small border town in Texas as part of a very large Hispanic community. This community was very benevolent and allowed me to pursue my studies and my professional career path. I want to pay it forward and inspire others to go into medicine or other healthcare related fields.

Contact

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JIM GARCIA

CEO and Founder

Tepeyac Community Health Center



BIO

Jim Garcia has been actively involved in Denver's non-profit community for the past 32 years and has worked in leadership capacities for a wide range of health and human service organizations. Early in his career, Jim worked in the political arena in the offices of former US Senator Tim Wirth and former Governor Roy Romer.

In 1994, Jim founded Tepeyac Community Health Center (TCHC), a non-profit healthcare organization that provides medical, behavioral health, dental, pharmacy and health education to Denver's predominantly uninsured, immigrant community. In his role as TCHC's Chief Executive Officer, he led a \$13M capital campaign to build a new 25,000 sq. ft. community health center that will eventually triple TCHC's patient capacity. In February of 2023, TCHC opened its state-of-the-art medical facility.

In 1997, Jim cofounded Escuela de Guadalupe, a dual-language elementary school that serves primarily lower-income families throughout Metro Denver. Jim was also a member of the founding Board of Trustees for Arrupe Jesuit High School, a school that fully integrates a corporate work-study program into its curriculum.

Originally from Albuquerque, New Mexico, Jim received his undergraduate degree from Regis University and his Master of Public Administration from the University of Colorado at Denver.

What inspires you to be a part of the Regis HSI Community Advisory Group?

As an alumnus of Regis University, I am extraordinarily proud of my alma mater for taking the important step of becoming an HSI, thereby expanding the educational/career opportunities for countless Latina/o young people. As a member of the HSI Community Advisory Group, I feel as though I am in a unique position to support and promote Regis' HSI status, with the goal of expanding the opportunity of a Jesuit education for more deserving students.

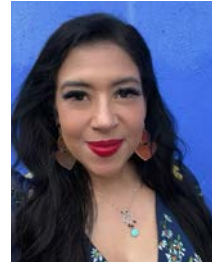
Contact

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RACHEL GARCIA

Executive Director

Mexican Cultural Center



BIO

Rachel Garcia has deep roots and connections in her hometown of Denver. She has a great dedication to the arts and creative communities in Denver. Rachel has gained a sense of belonging within the arts and creative communities and they have endowed upon her the beauty of cultural traditions she is proud to pass along to her daughter, Annalisia. Rachel graduated from the University of Colorado at Denver and has a Certificate in Executive Leadership with an emphasis on the issues and challenges affecting the Latinx Community/Population and a Certificate in Inclusive Leadership/Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility.

Rachel is a founding member and CEO of Colectiva, a collective of creatives that curate culturally inspired experiences that elevate and promote Latino Creatives via culture, art and cuisine. In service to her community, Rachel currently serves as Chair of the Board of Directors of Artisti-co, Vice Chair of the Mexican Cultural Center, is a member of several municipal LatinX Advisory Councils, is a Covid-19 Vaccine Ambassador and a Mental Health Anti-Stigma Ambassador in partnership with the Metro Denver Partnership for Health focusing on the Latinx community. She is also a member of the Scientific and Cultural District Community Acts Fund Advisory Council.

What inspires you to be a part of the Regis HSI Community Advisory Group?

Our community needs strong leaders, and Regis is creating a critical pipeline of leadership through their HSI initiatives. For so many reasons, HSI work is more vital than ever, I am inspired by the students, the faculty, staff and administrators of Regis and their commitment to advocate for the Latino identifying community.

Contact

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NITA GONZALES

Principal
Nuevo Amanecer, LLC



BIO

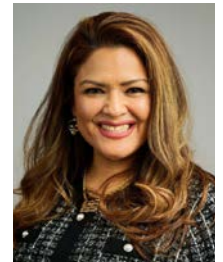
As the oldest daughter of civil rights icons Corky and Geraldine Gonzales, Nita Gonzales was destined to become an activist. She began her activism career as a young adult during the Chicano Movement of the 70s that challenged the social injustices generations of Latinos endured. She has said that her parents' work has inspired her to become a proud daughter of the movement and to take on many causes of social justice.

Today Nita serves as Principal of Nuevo Amanecer, LLC, and has become a noted community member, educator, and nationally recognized leader for educational, environmental, health, and community justice and equality. She has a long list of boards she has served on, including Regis University. Her work has always integrated a commitment to building capacity in communities of color to advance health, political, educational, and climate solutions; reforming policy practices; shifting discourses that centralize the voices of those most impacted by injustices and inequities; and strengthening relationships between environmental organizations, organizations of color and others such as governments and community based organizations.

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BEATRIZ (BEA) GONZALEZ

Vice President,
*Senior Community Reinvestment Outreach Manager,
BMO Bank, N.*



BIO

Beatriz Gonzalez has been with BMO Bank, N.A (formerly Bank of the West) for over seven years. She was recently promoted to Senior Community Reinvestment Outreach Manager, where she leads CRA initiatives and manages community-focused strategies across the West Coast. Her leadership includes crafting market-specific CRA and Fair Lending programs and building impactful partnerships with community, civic, and nonprofit organizations to position BMO Bank, N.A as a trusted advocate for community advancement.

Beatriz is known for her thought leadership in advancing diversity and economic equity, collaborating across the private, philanthropic, and nonprofit sectors. She was appointed by Governor Polis in 2020 to serve on two task forces focused on housing stability in Colorado and continues to support similar efforts. As a proud first-generation Mexican American, Beatriz is deeply rooted in family and community. She's been married for over 15 years and enjoys time with her four adult children, four granddaughters, one grandson-and riding her Harley-Davidson through the Rocky Mountains.

What inspires you to be a part of the Regis HSI Community Advisory Group?

Beatriz is honored to serve on the Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Committee at Regis University. As a mother of first-generation Hispanic college graduates, she holds a deep personal passion for advancing access to higher education. She understands the transformative power education has within families and communities and is committed to supporting Regis University's hope to be a national leader among HSI-designated institutions.

Contact
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RENÉ GONZALEZ

MBA, PH.D.

State Director, Health Access and Quality
American Diabetes Association



BIO

René Gonzalez immigrated from Mexico with her parents and eight siblings to work in the agricultural fields of northern Colorado, where her father was part of the Bracero program. Growing up, she learned English as a second language while pursuing her education. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Northern Colorado, a Master's in Business Administration from Regis University, and completed her Ph.D. from Colorado State University in 2018.

In her current role, René focuses on fostering partnerships with external organizations, emphasizing equity and social determinants of health. As a bilingual and bicultural professional, René has held various leadership roles, including State Equity Commissioner, Executive Director, and Liaison to the Mexican Consulate.

What inspires you to be a part of the Regis HSI Community Advisory Group?

My inspiration for being part of Regis' HSI Community Advisory Group comes from my deep connection to the university and my commitment to creating opportunities for Latine and first-generation students. As a first-generation student myself and an alumnus of Regis, I understand firsthand the challenges and barriers that many students face. My experience as a business professor at Regis allowed me to see the impact that a supportive and inclusive academic environment can have on student success.

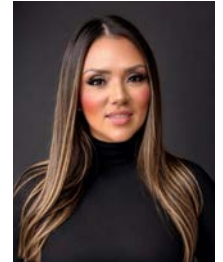
Having played a key role in securing HSI status for Regis, I feel a deep responsibility to ensure that this designation is more than just a title—it must translate into meaningful resources, representation, and opportunities for the students it serves. I want to continue advocating for policies and initiatives that empower Latine students, celebrate their cultural heritage, and provide them with the support they need to thrive academically and beyond. I continue to partner with Regis University as the head coach for both the women's and men's club soccer teams.

Contact

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WENDY LUBIN

Academic Dean
Red Rocks Community College



BIO

Wendy Lubin is a dedicated higher education leader serving as an Academic Dean at Red Rocks Community College. As a first-generation Latina college graduate, she is passionate about helping students navigate their educational journeys.

Currently pursuing a Doctorate in Higher Education Leadership at Maryville University, Wendy holds a Master's in Teaching and Learning from Colorado State University and a Bachelor's in Sociology with a Psychology minor from the University of Colorado Denver.

Wendy chairs the HSI Taskforce, supporting her institution's development as an emerging Hispanic-Serving Institution. She is committed to advancing equity, fostering belonging, and strengthening community partnerships. A co-author of a pharmacy technician textbook, Wendy aspires to serve as a Vice President of Academic Affairs to further impact academic programs and student success.

What inspires you to be a part of the Regis HSI Community Advisory Group?

As a first-generation Latina college graduate and an Academic Dean, I am committed to advancing equity, student success, and institutional transformation—particularly in serving Hispanic and Latinx students. My role as Chair of the HSI Taskforce has allowed me to lead efforts in creating inclusive learning environments, strengthening community partnerships, and developing initiatives that support Hispanic student achievement.

Joining Regis' HSI Community Advisory Group is an opportunity to collaborate with like-minded professionals, share best practices, and contribute to the development of strategies that enhance HSI efforts. I bring experience in academic leadership, student success programs, and data-informed decision-making, and I look forward to working with the group to advance institutional and systemic change.

With a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities Hispanic students face, I am committed to ensuring that HSIs fulfill their mission of providing access, support, and pathways to success.

Contact

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ERIKA R. MARTINEZ

CEO and Founder

Tepeyac Community Health Center

Director of Communications and Engagement

Denver Public Library



BIO

Erika R. Martinez is a seasoned communications and marketing leader with over 25 years of experience in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. She specializes in developing and executing strategic marketing and communications plans, with expertise in media relations, digital media, internal communications, outreach, partnerships, and government affairs.

Currently serving as the Director of Communications and Community Engagement for the Denver Public Library, Erika leads a team focused on system-wide efforts in communications, marketing, partnerships, and community engagement supporting 27 libraries that serve approximately 4 million residents and visitors annually.

A first-generation college graduate, Erika earned her B.A. in Communications from the University of Colorado Denver and an M.B.A. in Marketing from Regis University. Passionate about community service, she co-founded LatinasGive!, Colorado's first Latina philanthropic giving circle. Erika's dedication has earned her numerous awards, including the Unsung Heroine Award and the Juana Bordas Leadership Award. She is married to Danny D. Martinez and enjoys traveling, spending time with friends, and hiking.

What inspires you to be a part of the Regis HSI Community Advisory Group?

As a young middle school student, Regis University was the first college I stepped foot in. It was a magical feeling I will never forget. As a graduate student, I learned about the values of striving for excellence, being of service to others, and a commitment to social justice which resonate deeply with me and continue to guide me. I believe in giving back to the organizations and communities that lifted me up and supported my journey. Regis has done that for me and it's an honor to play a small role in its continued success.

Contact

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CARLA MESTAS MA

Founder and Executive Director

Circle Organization



BIO

Carla Mestas is the Founder and Executive Director of CIRCLE Organization (Connecting Inclusive Responsive Communities Leading Education), which runs the youth leadership program 'Students Taking Action and Making Progress' (STAMP) in Denver and beyond.

With over 25 years in social justice, diversity, equity, inclusiveness and belonging, Carla has served as a consultant, public speaker, facilitator, trainer, writer and community leader. She believes every person deserves to be seen, heard and included regardless of background.

A respected leader who has worked extensively with diverse communities at national, state and local levels, Carla approaches her work using a head, heart and hands methodology rooted in her Indigenous/Native American and Latina heritage.

Carla is a 2023-2025 Livingston Fellow with Bonfils Stanton Foundation, recipient of the Community Rosa Parks Award, graduate of The Denver Foundation's Executive Directors of Color Institute, and participant in the Visiones Leadership Program. Her greatest pride is being mother to three children who continue making a difference in the world.

What inspires you to be a part of the Regis HSI Community Advisory Group?

As a first-generation student I know and understand the challenges and opportunities that exist for young people. It is an honor to be a part of the HSI Advisory Group with Regis University to support the intentionality of this work and the initiatives that support generations of bright, bold and beautiful students who will make a positive impact and difference in our community and the world!

Contact

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LUIS RAMOS

Executive Director

Relationship Executive (Commercial Banker), J. P. Morgan



BIO

Luis Ramos is a commercial banker on J.P. Morgan's Healthcare, Higher Education and Nonprofit (HHN) Banking team based in Denver, Colorado. He supports client relationships across the Intermountain West region. Prior to joining the firm in 2019, Luis spent six years working in public finance as a financial advisor to municipalities throughout New Mexico, Texas and Colorado. Luis spent the first three years of his professional career as a high school teacher and basketball coach at a charter school in Albuquerque, NM prior to going into the finance industry.

Luis holds a bachelor's degree in bilingual education from the University of New Mexico.

What inspires you to be a part of the Regis HSI Community Advisory Group?

As a first-generation college graduate, joining a Hispanic Serving Institution Advisory Group is a deeply inspiring opportunity for me. I understand the challenges Latino students face, and I'm passionate about advocating for resources and support to help them succeed. My goal is to expose students to industries that haven't traditionally been seen as opportunities for Latinos. By doing so, I hope to inspire them to explore new career paths and break through societal barriers, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and diverse workforce.

Contact

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ROSEMARY E. RODRIGUEZ

Founder

Cafecito Denver, a volunteer organization of Latina Women to gather around ideas



BIO

After retiring from government service in 2017, Rosemary Rodriguez founded Together We Count, an effort to increase participation by Colorado's hard-to-count communities in the 2020 Census.

Rodriguez's career in government included eight years as the State Director for United States Senator Michael F. Bennet. While working for Bennet, she was elected to the Denver Public Schools Board of Education in 2013. In 2007, she was appointed by President George W. Bush to the United States Election Assistance Commission. She was elected to the Denver City Council in 2003, and in 1996, appointed by Mayor Wellington E. Webb as Clerk and Recorder for the City and County of Denver. Rodriguez also chaired the 2001 Colorado Reapportionment Commission, a constitutional body responsible for redrawing legislative districts following the 2000 Census. Rosemary is a Colorado native and attended Metropolitan State College (now Metropolitan State University), where she studied Political Science.

What inspires you to be a part of the Regis HSI Community Advisory Group?

I am passionate about education and volunteer my time to support educational opportunities in a variety of ways.

Contact

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RUTH SANCHEZ

AARP
El Comité



BIO

After dropping out of high school, Ruth was the first in her family to attend college, graduating from Black Hills State University with a degree in business administration and wellness. She moved to Denver in 1988 for an internship at Coors Wellness Center and was recruited as a first-generation Latina to the master's program in public policy at the University of Colorado.

Ruth's career began in banking before she started her own real estate company. She also worked with The National Hispana Leadership Institute, coordinating the five-city Conexion Latina program and managing the National Hispana program.

An avid volunteer, Ruth has served with AARP for over twenty years, attending their National Volunteer Leadership Institute and serving on the Executive Council, El Comité, and as AARP representative to the Denver Elections Commission. She became the first Latina to chair the Mayor's Commission on the Aging and received AARP's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2024.

Ruth is also active in the American GI Forum veterans organization, having served as Colorado State Chairwoman, National Vice Chairwoman and Treasurer. She has three college-graduate children, six grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

What inspires you to be a part of the Regis HSI Community Advisory Group?

I'm inspired and committed to be a part of Regis HSI to help prepare, mentor, and support the next generation that they may be inspired and hold meaning to their lives and the communities that have shaped them. It is important that the students are given an opportunity to achieve a higher education and pursue their goals and dreams.

Contact

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LORENZO A. TRUJILLO

ED.D., J.D.



Director

*Latino Cultural Arts
Center Mariachi Program*

Director

Southwest Musicians

Vice Chairman,

Tesoro Cultural Center

President

Hilos Culturales

Director

*Nuestra Raices: Música
Mariachi Rocky Ridge
Music*

Board Member

*Baroque Chamber
Orchestra of Colorado*

Board Member

*Vilacello International
String and Piano Festival
(Pennsylvania and Italy)*

Trustee

Colorado Symphony

BIO

Lorenzo Trujillo is a respected figure in Southwestern music and culture who has dedicated his life to preserving traditional folk music and dance. As Director of the Southwest Musicians and Artistic Director of the MSU Denver Mariachi Program, he has shaped the region's cultural landscape for six decades.

A talented folk violinist, guitarist, and ethnic dancer, Dr. Trujillo received the 1996 Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts. He is also an accomplished attorney whose work earned him the University of Colorado's prestigious Norlin Award.

Dr. Trujillo has recorded extensively, with his album "The Golden Age of the Southwest" showcasing his knowledge of regional history. His performances include tours in Italy, Peru, and Mexico. Inducted into the Colorado Chicano Music Hall of Fame in 2009, his work inspires new generations committed to preserving cultural heritage.

What inspires you to be a part of the Regis HSI Community Advisory Group?

Dr. Trujillo is committed to the mission of the Regis University HSI Advisory Group to support HSI students in their life journey. He is a recipient of the superior Jesuit education provided by the University of San Francisco and is committed to the quality education of Jesuit institutions.

Contact

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GILBERT E. VIGIL

PH.D.

Founder and Executive Director

Circle Organization

Retired Healthcare Professional

BIO

Dr. Gilbert E. Vigil is a dedicated healthcare professional and community leader with a lifelong commitment to education, service, and mentorship. A Denver native born in Commerce City, CO, he pursued his undergraduate studies at the University of Colorado, Boulder (1976-1979), before earning his Doctor of Dental Surgery from the University of Colorado School of Dentistry in 1983.

Dr. Vigil established a respected private practice, Gilbert E. Vigil DDS, serving the North Denver community from 1987 to 2010. His professional affiliations include memberships in the American Dental Association (ADA), Colorado Dental Association (CDA), and the Metro Denver Dental Society (MDDS). He was also an active member of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and has been honored with numerous civic awards for his contributions to the community.

What inspires you to be a part of the Regis HSI Community Advisory Group?

Dr. Vigil currently serves on the Board of Directors at Tepeyac Community Health Center and continues to advocate for accessible healthcare and education. He is deeply passionate about mentoring students and fostering opportunities for academic and professional growth. His strong interest in joining the Regis Community Advisory Group stems from his belief in the power of education to transform lives. Regis' diverse programs provide students with the tools to carve out their own unique paths, and Dr. Vigil finds great fulfillment in guiding and supporting them as they navigate their journeys toward success.

Contact

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JOURDAN VIGIL

Project Manager

Provider Recruiting Operations, Unified Women's Health Care

BIO

As a Strategy & Operations Project Manager at Unified Women's Healthcare, I bridge the gap between high-level strategy and execution, driving operational excellence and business transformation. With a data-driven mindset and a passion for efficiency, I align process improvements, resource optimization, and strategic initiatives to accelerate growth and impact.

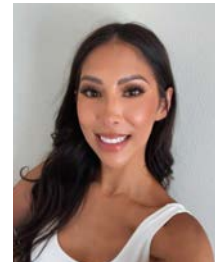
A Denver native, I earned both my bachelor's and master's degrees from Regis University. My commitment to mentorship and education is reflected in my role as a mentor for the Latina First Foundation and my active engagement in provider recruitment where I support future healthcare professionals.

What inspires you to be a part of the Regis HSI Community Advisory Group?

My inspiration for joining Regis University's HSI Community Advisory Group stems from my passion for education, mentorship, and student success. With deep roots in Denver, extensive healthcare experience, and a dedication to empowering the next generation, I am committed to uplifting Hispanic students in their academic and professional journeys.

Contact

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REGIS
UNIVERSITY
