

Underrepresentation of Hispanics in Higher Education & the Need to Change

Undergraduate, Graduate, Faculty, Presidents



by Antonia Hernández

TOMÁS RIVERA LECTURE SERIES



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF HISPANICS IN HIGHER EDUCATION (AAHHE)

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Underrepresentation of Hispanics in Higher Education & the Need to Change

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The 32nd Tomás Rivera Lecture

Presented at the Annual Conference of the
American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE)

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California Community Foundation

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PREFACE

ETS is pleased to join with the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE) to publish the 32nd annual Tomás Rivera Lecture. This year's lecture was delivered by Antonia Hernández, the president and chief executive officer of the California Community Foundation, a leading benefactor of health and human services, affordable housing, early childhood education, and arts and culture in Southern California.

A graduate of the UCLA School of Law, Ms. Hernández has been an advocate for the underserved in both the courtroom and the community. Prior to joining the California Community Foundation, she served as president and general counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund; staff attorney with the Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice; and counsel to the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

Throughout her career, Ms. Hernández has focused on the interests of the underserved. In her Tomás Rivera remarks, she examined underrepresentation of Hispanics in higher education. Recalling her efforts, while a student at East Los Angeles Community College, to increase the number of Latino undergraduates, she said, "Yes, we have made progress," she said, "but not nearly enough." The question she posed to her audience was both strategic and tactical: "What can be done to accelerate the progress?"

It is a question for all of us who care deeply about expanding access, equity and quality in education. And her answers, in the pages that follow, are ones to which all of us should pay close attention. As Ms. Hernández noted, "This is not just a Latino issue. It is an American issue." ETS shares Ms. Hernández's goals as well as her prescription for persistent and unwavering work toward closing opportunity gaps through education.

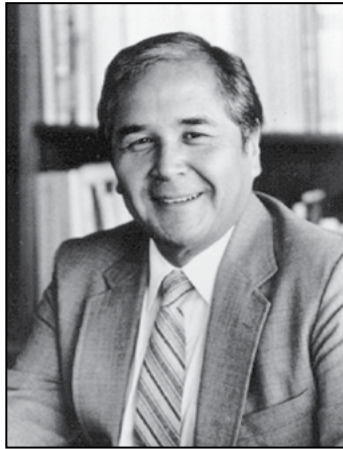


Walt MacDonald
President and CEO
Educational Testing Service

ABOUT THE TOMÁS RIVERA LECTURE

Each year a distinguished scholar or prominent leader is selected to present the Tomás Rivera Lecture. In the tradition of the former Hispanic Caucus of the American Association for Higher Education, AAHHE is continuing this lecture at its annual conference. It is named in honor of the late Dr. Tomás Rivera, professor, scholar, poet and former president of the University of California, Riverside.

About Tomás Rivera



Author, poet, teacher and lifelong learner, Tomás Rivera was born in Texas to farm laborers who were Mexican immigrants. Neither parent had a formal education.

He received B.S. and M.Ed. degrees in English and administration from Southwest Texas State University, and his M.A. in Spanish literature and a Ph.D. in Romance languages and literature from the University of Oklahoma. Rivera also studied Spanish culture and civilization at the University of Texas, Austin and in Guadalajara, Mexico.

He taught at Sam Houston State University and was a member of the planning team that built the University of Texas, San Antonio, where he also served as chair of the Romance Languages Department, associate dean and vice president.

In 1978, Rivera became the Chief Executive Officer at the University of Texas, El Paso, and in 1979, he became Chancellor of the University of California, Riverside. Rivera was an active author, poet and artist. By age 11 or 12, he was writing creatively about Chicano themes, documenting the struggles of migrant workers. He did not write about politics and did not view his work as political. He published several poems, short prose pieces, and essays on literature and higher education.

He served on the boards of Educational Testing Service, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the American Association for Higher Education, and the American Council on Education. In addition, Rivera was active in many charitable organizations and received many honors and awards. He was a founder and president of the National Council of Chicanos in Higher Education and served on commissions on higher education under Presidents Carter and Reagan.

Tomás Rivera Lecturers

2016	Antonia Hernández	2000	David Hayes-Bautista
2015	Manuel T. Pacheco	1999	Jim Cummins
2014	Yvette Donado	1998	Samuel Betances
2013	Francisco G. Cigarroa	1997	Albert H. Kauffman
2012	Luis Ubiñas	1996	Rolando Hinojosa Smith
2011	Rachel F. Moran	1995	Ronald Takai
2010	Charles B. Reed & Jack Scott	1994	Norma Cantú
2009	Marta Tienda	1993	Gregory R. Anrig
2008	Jamie Merisotis	1992	Henry Cisneros
2007	Sonia Nazario	1991	Toni Morrison
2006	Michael A. Olivas	1990	Tomás Arciniega
2005	Raúl Yzaguirre	1989	David Hamburg
2004	Angela Oh	1988	Arturo Madrid
2003	Piedad Robertson	1987	Ann Reynolds
2002	Harold L. Hodgkinson	1986	Alfredo G. de los Santos Jr.
2001	Félix Gutiérrez	1985	John Maguire

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This publication reproduces the keynote address delivered at the AAHHE annual conference in March 2016, in Costa Mesa, California. AAHHE is grateful for the leadership of its Board of Directors and the members of its conference planning committee for coordinating the appearance of keynote speaker Antonia Hernández.

At Educational Testing Service, Eileen Kerrigan, Sally Acquaviva, Terri Flowers, Jon Rochkind and Darla Mellors provided editorial and production direction and support. The ETS Policy Evaluation and Research Center (PERC) gratefully acknowledges the guidance and support of AAHHE and particularly its President, Loui Olivas, in the publication of the Tomás Rivera Lectures.

THE AAHHE-ETS ALLIANCE



For 10 years, ETS has supported the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE). As Executive Director of the ETS Center for Advocacy and Philanthropy, I have had the pleasure of working with AAHHE in sponsoring and designing the Outstanding Dissertations Competition, including the Kurt M. Landgraf Outstanding Dissertation Award, and the Latino/a Student Success Institute. We are grateful to the ETS Policy Evaluation and Research Center for publishing the annual Tomás Rivera Lecture.

Each of these highly rewarding initiatives aligns with the ETS commitment to support the underserved and underrepresented student populations, and with our mission of helping to advance quality and equity in education for all learners. We are honored that Antonia Hernández was selected to present the 2016 Lecture.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lenora M. Green". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Lenora M. Green
Executive Director
Center for Advocacy and Philanthropy
Educational Testing Service

ANTONIA HERNÁNDEZ DELIVERS TOMÁS RIVERA LECTURE

I first met our Tomás Rivera Lecturer when she was President and General Counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense & Education Fund, one of the premier advocacy organizations in the country. Before joining MALDEF as a Regional Counsel in Washington in 1981, she was a staff attorney with the Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice and then worked as counsel to the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

She was nationally recognized for her commitment toward the betterment of underserved communities in Los Angeles and beyond. Since February 2004, she has been the Chief Executive Officer and President of the California Community Foundation, where she oversees all operational and programmatic activities.

She has been a director of Local Initiatives Support Corporation since January 2007; Grameen America, LLC since October 2013; of Golden West Financial Corporation since 1995; of California Community Foundation; and a Trustee of the Rockefeller Foundation. She also serves

on various commissions, advisory boards, committees and panels, including the Pacific Council for International Policy. She serves as a member of the Boards of Directors of the American Constitution Society, the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, the national American Automobile Association, and the Automobile Club of Southern California.

She serves on the Commission on Presidential Debates, the Institute of Politics at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, the Center for Talented Youth at Johns Hopkins University, the JFK Library Foundation Profile in Courage Award Committee and the UCLA School of Law Board of Advisors. She is a frequent public speaker and has received a number of honorary degrees and awards.

She is a member of the State Bar of California, District of Columbia Bar, American Bar Association and the Mexican American Bar Association of Los Angeles, and a Fellow of the American Law Institute. She earned her bachelor's degree in history from the University of California, Los Angeles, and also holds a J.D. from UCLA.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure and honor to present the 2016 Tomás Rivera Lecture presenter, a role model, community leader and my friend: Antonia Hernández.



*Jim Estrada
Principal
Estrada Consulting Group*

Good evening, *buenas tardes*, welcome to Southern California. I'd first like to mention the recent passing of one of the early pioneers of Latina/o academia, Juan Lara. It is a privilege to be here with you tonight. I first gave the Tomás Rivera lecture in 1992 at Stanford University. I believe it was a few years ago that I addressed you in San Antonio, Texas. I first want to thank Dr. Loui Olivas for inviting me back — I guess I did not do too badly last time. I see many friends in the audience, many *veteranos*, who have been in the struggle to improve the education, economic, social and political well-being of Latinos in the U.S. I am also thrilled to see so many young faces — it shows that our future will be in good hands.

As a young community college student at East Los Angeles Community College, I recall volunteering with the Mexican American Student Association, one of the early college organizations created by Latinos for Latinos. One of our priorities was to increase the number of Latinos in college. That was in 1966. Well, it seems that not much has changed. The question remains: Is the glass half empty or half full? I will suggest that we have made progress; when the glass is empty, filling the glass seems like an impossible task. Yes, we have made progress, but not nearly enough.

One of the things that has changed is that we now have a small but significant number of us who have made it. If you doubt that we have made progress, just look around this room. Back in 1966, we could have probably met in one small room. The question for us tonight is, what can be done to accelerate the progress?

The economy will need up to 2.3 million additional college-educated workers by 2025. That is only nine years from now. We are talking about our junior high school students of today.

In California, Los Angeles County is home to one-third of California Latinos. We are 48 percent of the total population. Here in Orange County, the perception is that this county is predominately white. Well, here are the facts: 34 percent of the Orange County population is Latino. California is the most populous state in the country, with an estimated 38.5 million residents. More importantly, it is home to more than 15 million Latinos. We are almost one-half of California's population. In fact, Latinos have become the largest ethnic group in California, outpacing the White population.

These demographic changes compel us to work even harder. The future of our community rests in our ability to close the opportunity gap. Much is at stake! Latinos will soon become a significant percentage of the United States population. But numbers alone do not make things better. For our community

“The economy will need up to 2.3 million additional college-educated workers by 2025. That is only nine years from now. We are talking about our junior high school students of today.”

“When the glass is empty, filling the glass seems like an impossible task. Yes, we have made progress, but not nearly enough.”

EDUCATION is the key — not only for our future well-being, but for the well-being of the nation.

So what is the call to action? What is the agenda?

First, we must recommit to continue as agents of change. We must come forth with solutions, not just demands. And we must show by our actions that we are a community determined to work for and define our destiny. We must be willing to challenge the status quo even if it affects us personally.

It has been difficult for many of us to reach our current status; we have worked hard. Unfortunately, we can't afford to sit back and enjoy our hard-earned rewards. Our work is not done. Change does not come easy. Change does not happen without discomfort, including our own.

So, what can we do? Here are a couple of suggestions:

First, update the statewide plans for higher education.

As a starter, we must demand an update of the statewide plans for higher education. Currently, all education institutions are undergoing significant stress. All need to change. Most, if not all, of the institutions of higher learning are still functioning with a 20th-century model that no longer works. A report just issued by the Harvard School of Education concludes that unless changes are made, higher education will be only for the wealthy.

In 1966, my poor, working-class parents could afford to send me to college. The community college fee was less than \$25 a semester, and the UCLA fees when I started in 1969 were \$87 per semester. Today, a working-class family struggles to afford to pay the fees to go to a community college. For many, a university is out of their reach. Few of those who do enter a four-year institution graduate. They are left with few life skills but huge debt. We need to demand that our legislators reinvest in education.

Demographically, we are a different country than in the 20th century. Technology has dramatically changed how we learn. Today's workforce demands a different way of thinking and working. Most students are older, have a family to support, and work. Have you changed how you teach? Have you incorporated technology and changed class schedules to allow flexibility so working individuals can attend college?

You need to model the change you want to see. The public and legislators are unhappy with the current state of affairs. Many are demanding better results for

the public's investment. This is the time and place where we can make a difference.

We now have increasing numbers of Latino elected officials to influence how the statewide plans are revised. Many of our Latino elected representatives were the first to go to college; they know and understand. We need to work with them and hold them accountable. You all must become forceful advocates for more education funding. Updating the statewide plans for higher education and increasing public funding must become a priority. This is not just a Latino issue — it is an American issue.

Second, we must revamp the community colleges. For many of our Latino students, the pathway to college is through the community colleges. We must improve the curriculum and provide students with clear transfer pathways to four-year institutions. For those who want to learn a trade, we must ensure that the skills students learn are what the workforce requires. And we must improve graduation rates. As most of you know, Latino students who do go to college attend community colleges and most drop out — no college degree, just a big loan obligation.

Third, demand and work for improving the educational pipeline. Make no mistake — the biggest barrier for our students is a lack of a high school diploma. And even many of those who graduate do not have the skills to do college work. Changes must begin in pre-school, elementary and secondary education. Many of our students do not graduate with the appropriate skills to pass college-level courses. For too many, their first years in community college are spent improving their math, writing and reading levels. Often these students get discouraged; to such students, community college looks like a continuation of high school.

For decades, our primary and secondary schools have failed us. We cannot afford to continue doing more of the same. It did not work then, and it surely is not working now. You must get out and work with the community-based organizations that are organizing parents. Today, we need a two-pronged strategy: working from within while at the same time agitating for change from the outside.

Fourth, we need more and different types of financial aid and wraparound support. We must use our political muscle to increase funding for education at all levels, and specifically college enrollment and growth. We must demand that institutions improve graduation rates. It is no longer good enough to get a student to graduate from high school and get them into college. The goal is to get the student to graduate from college.

“The future of our community rests in our ability to close the opportunity gap. Much is at stake! Latinos will soon become a significant percentage of the United States population. ”



Pictured (left to right) are Jim Estrada, Antonia Hernández and Michael Stern (Hernández's husband).

The California Community Foundation has totally revamped our scholarship programs. To respond to this critical situation, we created the Los Angeles Scholars Investment Fund (LASIF) dedicated to increasing college attainment in L.A. County, and specifically for students from low-income families. We do this by funding scholarships and services, and support nonprofits that not only help students prepare for college but also to succeed in college. For LASIF, helping low-income

students get into college is only the beginning. Our nonprofit partners work to ensure students have the personal, financial and academic support needed to successfully complete their degree. Since 2012, more than \$14 million has flowed to L.A. County programs. In 2014–15 alone, more than 17,500 local students benefited from these efforts: 94 percent of students from the inaugural class of 2013 continued to a second year of college. That is nearly 20 points higher than the national average.

Unfortunately, many families do not have the resources to send their children to college. They need financial assistance — grants, not just loans. Here, you can make a difference. We now have the economic means to assist other students. Start a scholarship fund. Many of us in this room were assisted financially with the cost of our college education. We can no longer put the entire onus on the government; we all must also pitch in. If each one of us financially helps or mentors a student, we would double the number of Latinos in college. I urge all of you to read the Harvard report. Unless we drastically change and assure greater access to the poor and middle-class students, we will lose our way.

Fifth, we must address the needs of immigrant students. In California, 94 percent of Latinos under the age of 18 are native-born. Some use this statistic to minimize

the need to give attention to the needs of immigrants. Yet, if you look a little closer, you find that most of these students are the children of immigrants and many of the parents undocumented.

Moreover, a significant number of Latino students are undocumented. In many states, these students do not have access to college or financial aid. But it is not just access and financial aid: we must change the curriculum to make it culturally appropriate. We must create an educational environment that is nurturing and inclusive.

Here in California, we have agitated for changes so that all of our Latino students are able to go to college. These changes did not come easy or happen overnight. It was the agitation, demands from the most vulnerable of our students, the undocumented, that led the fight. We need to learn from the Dreamers: they have put their lives on the line, publically declared their status and are demanding change. We must follow their lead. As they have shown, change does not come without sacrifice.

Sixth, our colleges and universities must commit to invest in increasing diversity. Specifically, we must increase the number of socially committed Latino/a presidents, deans and faculty. We must demand to be at the table where decisions are made. I understand that we all have our jobs to do. But for us, that is not enough. We must assume our responsibility to be role models. Many of us know how important it is to have a mentor who understands, nurtures and supports our work. Many of you hold leadership and positions of influence. Use your positions to open the doors for others. Adopt the mainstream networking model; we all know the importance of connections and relationships. Use your connections, relationships and influence to open the door for other Latinos.

We must demand that more resources are invested in increasing the diversity pipeline. You are a powerful group. There would be enough Latino/a Ph.D.s, Ed.D.s, that if each of you agreed to be a graduate advisor to a Latino graduate student, we could double the numbers in five years.

I challenge this group to adopt a goal of 1,000 Ph.D.s in 10 years. It is doable. It is from these 1,000 that we will get the college presidents, deans and faculty of the future. It is embarrassing that only 4 percent of total college presidents are Latina/o and most serve in community colleges. The needle has not changed in the last 20 years. I urge you to strengthen AAHHE, tax yourselves, fundraise, and build up your advocacy/public policy infrastructure. You need to have a strong voice in the legislative halls throughout the United States. To achieve systemic change, you need resources and the power of your large and growing members.

“Technology has dramatically changed how we learn. Today’s workforce demands a different way of thinking and working.”

In closing, I challenge you to continue being troublemakers, in-your-face advocates. You need not be hostile, but you must be persistent and willing to stay the course. Real, long-lasting change takes patience and time.

Change does not come easy. No one gives up power and influence without a struggle. After 40 years of making trouble, I know. As I look back, I am proud of my work with the Mexican American Legal and Educational Fund. We changed the funding formula for higher education in Texas and other states. We removed barriers and provided access and a pathway for our Latina/o students to succeed. Much more remains to be done. The struggle continues. The key to change is in your hands. *Muchísimas gracias!*

“It is no longer good enough to get a student to graduate from high school and get them into college. The goal is to get the student to graduate from college.”

SPEAKER'S BIOGRAPHY



*Antonia Hernández
President and Chief Executive Officer
California Community Foundation*

Nationally recognized for her commitment toward the betterment of underserved communities in Los Angeles and beyond, Antonia Hernández joined the California Community Foundation as President and Chief Executive Officer in 2004.

Established in 1915, the California Community Foundation is one of the largest and most active philanthropic organizations in Southern California, with assets of more than \$1 billion. In partnership with its more than 1,200 individual, family and corporate donors, the foundation supports nonprofit organizations and public institutions with funds for health and human services, affordable housing, early childhood education, community arts and culture, and other areas of need.

Previously, Hernández was president and general counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), a national nonprofit litigation and advocacy organization dedicated to protecting the civil rights of the nation's Latinos through the legal system, community education, and research and policy initiatives.

An expert in philanthropy, civil rights and immigration issues, Hernández began her legal career as a staff attorney with the Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice and worked as counsel to the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary before joining MALDEF in 1981 as regional counsel in Washington, D.C.

Hernández is a board member of the national American Automobile Association, the Automobile Club of Southern California, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Council on Foundations and Grameen America. She currently serves on advisory boards and committees including the Commission on Presidential Debates, the JFK Library Foundation Profile in Courage Award Committee and UCLA Board of Advisors, among others. She is a frequent public speaker and has been awarded a number of honorary degrees and awards.

Hernández is a member of the State Bar of California, District of Columbia Bar, American Bar Association and the Mexican American Bar Association of Los Angeles, and a Fellow of the American Law Institute.

Hernández earned her B.A. in history at UCLA in 1970 and J.D. at the UCLA School of Law in 1974.

“Updating the statewide plans for higher education and increasing public funding must become a priority. This is not just a Latino issue — it is an American issue.”

NOTES

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