

NHSN Quarterly Newsletter: March 2016

Welcome Message from the Editors of *El Faro*, Sandra Oviedo Ramirez and Allyson Hughes.



Welcome to the Spring 2016 edition of *El Faro: La Voz de la Red*. The purpose of

this newsletter is to keep you up to date with current topics and research amongst the members of the National Hispanic Science Network (NHSN) and the Early Career Leadership Committee (ECLC).

We encourage you to read this edition as we celebrate International Women's Day by highlighting some of the dynamic female members of NHSN.

The newsletter's feature article, *Bouncing off the Glass Ceiling: The Challenges and Barriers that Still Exist for Women in Academia*, sets the stage for our International Women's Day issue by

describing the struggle of fighting the statistics for women in academia and educational occupations.

This edition's *Career Diva* features Margarita Alegría, Ph.D., a distinguished scientist who has a professorship at Harvard. Margarita provides sound and poignant advice regarding academia. Read *Nuestra Voz*, written by Cristina B. Bares, MSW, Ph.D., for details about navigating professional learning experiences early in her career. This edition's *International Front* features Mary Cuadrado, Ph.D., who has examined addictions (alcohol, drugs, and gambling) and crime in the U.S. and Mexico.

Special thanks to all the contributors and to everyone who helped with the planning of this special issue! If you are interested in being part of a future edition of *El Faro*, please feel free to contact us. We hope you enjoy the issue. Happy spring!

Sincerely,

Sandra & Allyson



Susana Villalobos, M.Ed., is a 3rd year doctoral student in the Educational Leadership and Foundations

Department at the University of Texas at El Paso. She is currently under the mentorship of Dr. Angus Mungal. Her primary area of interest is providing a qualitative eye on the demographic data of female professors currently working along the U.S.-Mexico border and their experiences of reaching the apex of the academic hierarchy. Angus Shiva Mungal, PhD is an Assistant Professor in the Educational Leadership and Foundations Department at the University of Texas at El Paso. His areas of research include advocacy, equity, leadership, social justice, policy analysis and research.

“The dynamism of any diverse community depends not only on the diversity itself but on promoting a sense of belonging among those who formerly would have been considered and felt themselves outsiders.” — Sonia Sotomayor (U.S. Supreme Court Justice)

Bouncing off the Glass Ceiling: The Challenges and Barriers that Still Exist for Women in Academia

Susana Villalobos, M.Ed. and Angus Shiva Mungal, Ph.D.

Gender is often viewed as a two-sided paradigm, allocating males and females into specific categories. The category makeup is of socially constructed rules and regulations perpetuating the gender ideology. Like the rest of society pursuing career advancement, much, if not most women pursuing the apex of academia hierarchy have the same experience, education and qualifications as their male counterparts; however, most of the faculty and higher education administration positions are still filled by men (Knapp, Kelly-Reid & Ginder, 2010). Service positions such as secretarial and support administrations are predominantly dominated by women and minority groups. *Bouncing off the glass ceiling* refers to the idea that while women have made great strides legally, politically and economically, unless there are greater gains that parallel the population of women where women



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have reached equity, then we are only stretching the glass ceiling.

This article highlights the ever-present symbolic and realistic challenges in higher education still facing women pursuing leadership roles today. This article also identifies the positive factors and current faculty/administration recommendations that will enable the success of women in higher education leadership roles.

The “miss” diagnosis

As in the field of medicine, if one has previously misdiagnosed a patient, then a more effective cure is likely. This can also be said of the situation regarding the scarcity of women in higher education leadership. Most likely the symptoms have been misread, and the solutions not invested in making enough of a difference for the female representativeness landscape of a female student body mirroring university administration. The current presidential campaign of Hillary Clinton resonates with the continued argument in promoting women’s issues and opportunity. The same issues that she strives for women’s rights parallel the problems in advancing

leadership in higher education among women. Women in American society still face the issues of the pay gap (Women earn 78 cents for every dollar a man earns in the same position, (Equal Pay Taskforce, 2012), balancing life and work (Dominici, et al., 2008), and protecting women’s health and reproductive rights (American Association of University Women, 2011).

For many women, the field of education has presented a number of opportunities and challenges. Multiple pressures may contribute to not pursuing leadership positions in higher education. Women in higher education contend with issues that may result in putting their career pathway on hold. As a result, women may have fewer hours on the job experience, and have fewer hours of employment per year, which will result in a slower progress and reduce earnings in their higher education career earnings (U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission, 2010). Though claims of equitable hiring practices excludes discrimination of women, there are still holdouts in human resources who may deal with these issues by not hiring women,



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excluding them from the same social networks as male faculty, or penalizing them for aspiring to raise a family while pursuing a career in higher education (Hill, Corbet & Rose, 2010).

Despite years of progress for women's rights, women in the higher education workforce occupy less than 26 % of all full-time faculty positions in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). According to the Catalyst (2015), the percentage is even lower for Hispanic women who held a mere 2.5% of tenure-track positions and 2.3 % of tenured positions in 2013. The Catalyst report (2015) also found that women hold fewer lecturer positions than men at the senior level, men receive higher pay and more perks than women, and between 1998 and 2012, 92% of while male faculty are awarded tenure versus 55% of women and minority faculty.

The complex journey

Understanding the various barriers, and listening to the women who somehow found their way around their journey to the

top, may work more effectively in improving the situation. Imagine if you will, taking a journey, with no map, an unknown distance, and no markers along the way to mark your route. The journey becomes a force of will, persistence, a goal worth striving for beyond the challenges and barriers. For women who aspire to higher education faculty and administration, there exist many twists and turns, the expected ones and the non-expected. It is well established that the mentoring role of a leader, results in more successful outcomes for the mentee in any role, whether as an undergraduate, graduate, and faculty (Kogler, Bahniuk, & Dobos, 1989; Santos & Reigadas, 2002; Johnson, 2007). The research in academic mentoring finds that the components of mentoring are beneficial to both mentor and mentee. These include career enhancement, professional networking, increased self-esteem, and increased professional development (Bland, Shollen, Weber-Main, & Mulcahy, 2009; Sambunjak, Straus, & Marušić, 2006; Berk, Mortimer, Walton-Moss, Yeo, 2005).



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Together, these components can help shape the growth of women in academia.

Conclusion

The issue of equity is important in America, particularly in higher education institutions. Hispanic women only represented 6% of those conferred with STEM field doctorate degrees in 2012-2013, while men overall represented 70.8% STEM conferred Ph.D.'s (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Women's rights have slowly progressed from Abigail Adams letter to her husband John Adams to "remember the ladies," gaining the right to vote in 1920, banning sex discrimination in schools (Title IX), to Geraldine Ferraro's nomination for Vice-President of the United States (Ruthsdotter, 1993). The dream of these women created a larger sisterhood with their achievements. They paved the way for future generations of women in becoming influential in their field and in

their community regardless of gender.

Future research may seek to examine the transition of women from doctoral degree to higher education administration, or examine the arguments of the current higher education administration leadership on their views from within. The topic could be expanded to examine their interactions with potential candidates for employment, including the controversial topic of equitable gender leadership roles. The topic of women's higher education journey to the leadership role is a rich topic that offers multiple future research possibilities as well as illuminating future generations of women pursuing their passion in Education.

"If I had any talent in the world, any talent that God could give me, I would be a great diva."

-Ruth Bader Ginsburg

- *Note: For a full list of references please see pages 14-15.*



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Career Diva



Margarita Alegría, Ph.D., is the Chief of the Disparities Research Unit at Massachusetts General Hospital, and a Professor in the Department of

Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. Dr. Alegría is currently the PI of four National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded research studies. She is also the PI of a Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) project. Dr. Alegría has published over 200 papers, editorials, intervention training manuals, and several book chapters.

What are the top five things you think any woman aspiring to be in academia should know?

Have trust and faith in yourself.

Everyone has weaknesses or areas they do not excel in, and that is okay. The challenges you face in life are always an opportunity to expand your boundaries and learn. Even

your failures are opportunities to learn, and although you should acknowledge that there will be many of them in the start, you can't allow yourself to become attached to them or let them define your career. Failures are part of the journey to success, and that is why it is so crucial for you to have faith in yourself and your abilities. Likewise, you need to be able to trust yourself, because people will make incorrect judgments about your worth based on your failures. They might say you are an underachiever or that you aren't worth their time, but that is because they only see a part of you, not the totality of you. There is a lot you can contribute – that you *will* contribute – they just don't see it yet.

Be humble. The more you progress in your career, the more you will learn there is a lot you don't know. There are an infinite number of situations and topics that you will not be familiar with, which is why you have to stay humble and recognize your limitations.

Work in academia is extremely inspiring. You will always be surprised by



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how much there is for you to still learn. You will always be learning in academia whether it is through your attendance in classes or at conferences, your collaborations, or your own work. You will see first-hand how information can make a difference; it allows you to leave behind a legacy for others to follow, especially where there are voids of information.

Know the importance of perseverance and never giving up. Adversity in academia is inevitable. It could be in promotions, how others judge your work, your weaknesses... but you have to learn to not take it personally. Others' opinions of you or your work are not reflections of who you are as a person. You need to develop thick skin and be willing to face these adversities head on, because you will encounter many of them in your career. Over time, you will feel empowered when you look back on those experiences and see how you have overcome the obstacles that stood in your way; but if you stop fighting for yourself, you will have a difficult time building the resilience that will allow you to continue moving forward.

Take risks if you want to succeed.

Playing it safe will not get you to where you see yourself or where you want to be. In the course of your career, you will have to come to terms with the fact that there will always be people who won't like you, who believe you are wasting your time or theirs; but academia is a place to take risks – not only with your ideas, but also in your actions. People in academia should see themselves as visionaries, who think “Ideally, I would...” and then going out and doing it. That is how you grow, and that is how you succeed.

What is the biggest challenge that women still face in academia?

I would say the biggest challenge that women face is the inequity that still exists. One would think that in this day and age we would be closer than ever to achieving our goal of equality, but the truth is that we still have a long way to go. In academia, this battle includes equal pay, promotions, mentorship, and so on. I think part of the challenge is that there is a standard of value that is not upheld for women. For example, I have seen a woman



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present an idea and not be considered in the same light as the man who suggested that same idea ten minutes later. It is not always that women have their ideas valued at the same price as men, and this can be very disheartening. That is why it is so important for women who are interested in pursuing a career in academia to believe in themselves and to persevere despite the adversity that lies ahead of them.

Although times are changing, one of the biggest factors in eliminating this challenge will be institutional accountability. We must work to identify and acknowledge the presence of disparities in order to change them. It is the responsibility of everyone in a position of power to maintain fairness, from the chairs of departments to the professors in classrooms; and this responsibility does not only fall on men, but women as well. In 2012, Dr. Corinne Moss-Racusin and colleagues found that when male and female applicants with the same degree of experience and caliber of credentials were evaluated by faculty for a lab position, male applicants were not only more likely to be

hired, but were offered higher salary and mentorship than female applicants, who were viewed as less competent despite being indistinguishable from their male counterparts in all but name. One of the most interesting results from this study was that women on the faculty were just as likely as men to display this bias. Thus, the battle for equality will only be won when everyone stands and fights for it.

What advice would you give to women in academia?

The best piece of advice I could give is to find a great mentor – one who is very committed to seeing you grow and succeed as a professional.

Nuestra Voz



Cristina B. Bares, MS, MSW, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan School of Social Work. In her training, Dr. Bares was a pre-doctoral fellow



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on a NIMH training grant, completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Michigan's Curtis Center, is currently a member of the Early Career Leadership Committee and chairs NHSN's social networking efforts. Dr. Bares' NIDA-funded (K01) research focuses on understanding the contribution of genetic and environmental factors that jointly lead to the onset and regular use of substances in adolescence and emerging adulthood and examines developmental changes in the heritability of substance use as well as the influence of environmental exposures on substance use heritability.

Describe a professional learning experience along your career trajectory.

It was during my postdoctoral experiences that I developed a passion for conducting research on how genetic contributions and environmental risk factors worked together to lead to adolescent problem behaviors. Thinking about gene-by-environment interactions was inspiring during my training, but it has taken a lot of learning to have the opportunity to now be actively engaged in asking these type of research questions. While I had an understanding of the mechanisms through which

environmental effects worked through my social science training, I had little training in conducting research focused on the genetic contributions to complex behavioral traits. I had to learn a few things outside the classroom.

First, it wasn't until I learned how to seek and develop mentoring relationships with researchers working on interesting issues to me that allowed me to shape my career into identifying latent and measured genetic bases of psychiatric problems in addition to environmental effects. Establishing these mentorship relationships was not easy. I found that approaching mentors trained in a different discipline than I was challenging. In addition, it wasn't easy getting over the feeling that I was imposing on them. I sought out mentors and senior collaborators in medical departments who had made their careers out of studying the genetic contributions to disease and behavior. My training had been in the social sciences and this difference in disciplines made me a bit apprehensive at first. What helped me to approach mentors was to have a solid understanding of the type of work that they did and how their interests overlapped with



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mine. Thus, prior to contacting each person, I would sketch out the reasons why I was interested in their work. I would then explicitly state the ways that our interests matched. I wasn't successful at making connections with everyone that I contacted and not all who responded turned out to be individuals with whom I have fruitful collaborations, even though we might have had interesting conversations. But having a clear idea in mind about what I wanted and how they could help me made a huge difference in making connections.

Once I began working with my mentors, I realized that my mentors and I were approaching the same issue from different perspectives and this helped me to develop confidence and in turn, made me devote a lot of my time to learning to fill in gaps in my knowledge. I felt that my research questions were valuable and would eventually make important contributions, and this in turn inspired me even more. Prior to each meeting with my mentors, I would do outside readings, seek out trainings, attend seminars to be able to converse with them and advance my

research questions. As a result of my experiences, I think to be successful in academia one has to be comfortable and confident in seeking out learning opportunities that will advance their career and inspire them. Additionally, we must remember that learning opportunities may not just be in the classroom setting. On the contrary, many new and exciting learning opportunities occur outside the classroom.

International Front



Dr. Mary Cuadrado is Chair and Associate Professor of the Department of Criminal

Justice at the University of Texas at El Paso. During the past 25 years she has worked as a researcher in addictions (alcohol, drugs, and gambling) and crime, in New York City, Arizona, Florida, and Texas. She is especially interested in cultural differences between Hispanics and Anglo Americans



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that may increase the likelihood of engagement in deviance and resistance to drug treatment and/or intervention. She is also interested in the use of ethno-therapy (culturally sensitive methods) in the rehabilitation of criminal offenders and addicts. In 2003 she received a Fulbright Scholars award to conduct a 6-month study of alcohol and drug treatment programs in Mexico. Dr. Cuadrado's current research focuses on the use by Hispanics in the U.S. of Roman Catholic Priests and the grassroots practice of *Juramentos* or pledges made usually with a Roman Catholic Priest as a witness to the Virgin of Guadalupe to abstain from substance use for a time determined by the user.

Being an international female researcher has been a very positive, albeit challenging, experience for me. My international experience has been in Mexico. My goal during my first instance of data collection in Mexico, as a Fulbright Scholar, was to gather data from drug and alcohol treatment providers in as many states as I could during a 6 month stay. This led me to interact with federal, state, and local

agencies as well as private sector providers in 22 cities/towns in 12 states. The main challenges I faced were: 1) understanding a governmental bureaucracy different from the United States so I could make needed connections to collect my data; and, 2) learning the Mexican culture and customs wherein that bureaucracy exists so I would react appropriately if being a female researcher from the U.S. was to be a factor in collecting my data. My concern was first and foremost regarding the fact that I was a foreigner interested in finding information about Mexican substance treatment facilities and that these inquiries would be perceived as attempts to try to find inadequacies in their system that would make them look bad. Secondly, I had some minor concerns about how a foreign female researcher would be received by the mainly male dominated bureaucracy I would need to work with.

Whenever I am collecting data in the U.S., my approach has been to obtain support for my project at the highest level possible since it facilitates access to people and places. I knew this was the approach to follow in Mexico as well and I knew I



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needed support at the federal level. What I didn't know was how I would get in touch with a top person at the federal agency CONADIC (Comisión Nacional contra las Adicciones). Here is where being Hispanic (Puerto Rican/Dominican) gave me an advantage, I believe, because I understood that building personal relationships (*personalismo*) was the “easiest” and “surest” way to get to that top official to obtain his/her support for my project. I presented my situation to a colleague at my host institution (Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública) and she referred me to a colleague. I spent an entire month meeting people (often over coffee and/or a meal) who would usually refer me to someone else until I worked my way to the Director of CONADIC. This networking gave me a better understanding of the Mexican federal bureaucracy as well as getting a closer look at Mexican customs. It was exciting and comforting to learn that customs were similar enough to the ones I had been raised with so I soon felt at home. Any concerns I may have had about how being a female researcher from the U.S. would affect my

ability to collect data were totally dissipated. My patience paid off because the Director requested that one of his assistant directors help me in any way possible. After a few meetings, I left the CONADIC offices with a directory of individuals to contact in each state I was to visit and the authority to say that I had the full support of top-level people in the agency. It was smooth sailing from there. As soon as I would arrive at a city, I would contact the appropriate person in the directory and they often made the contacts and arrangements for my interviews. This allowed me to interview the directors or designated person in drug and alcohol treatment programs following a variety of modalities from AA to expensive private treatment programs without having to individually and independently initiate the establishment of trust required to be invited for an interview at each program. I realize many may think I was foolish for “wasting” a month networking when I could have used it to collect data. I believe my efforts were worth it in the end because although my primary goal was the data I also had the general objective to learn about



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the Mexican system and culture so it would be helpful in future research efforts. The people I met and learning about the bureaucracy gave me confidence and insights into possible future projects and set the stage for other trips.

If I had to give a new international researcher some advice I would say that when collecting data in another country take the time to learn the culture and to meet the people. I should note that while I was networking to meet the Director, I met many people who were not able to help me (many whom I suspected would not be helpful in advance after my meeting with them) but I met with them anyway because someone had taken the time to recommend them and because the person had made time to meet with me. I did not want anyone who had given me any time to feel I had ignored or dismissed their recommendation. I found that building that foundation of good relationships was very helpful in future trips I made to Mexico on other projects.

Members in the Spotlight



Congratulations to **Guillermo Prado, Ph.D.** for his new position as Dean of the University of Miami Graduate School.

Please note: In the future, if you are interested in sharing your news regarding promotions, grants, publications, etc., we encourage you to please contact Allyson or Sandra.



Conference Announcement

The National Hispanic Science Network's 15th Annual International Conference will take place **Wednesday, June 15 –Friday June 17, 2015 in Palm Springs, CA**. Plenary presentations will be given by Dr. Ricardo F. Munoz, Distinguished Professor of Clinical Psychology, Palo Alto University and



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Founder, Institute for International Interventions for Health. Additional panels will be focused on alcohol prevention among American Indian/ Alaskan Native populations, HIV and aging, dissemination and implementation of Science, sex and gender differences, and intersections of drug use. Mentoring activities will include an early-career investigator panel, speed mentoring session, a grant review panel, poster session and evening social events. The annual conference serves as an excellent platform for young investigators to promote their research interests, in addition to an opportunity for members to receive pertinent information regarding the future of the organization.

Please don't forget that registration for the conference is now open. Use the following link to complete your registration and gain more information related to the conference:

<http://nhsn.med.miami.edu/Conference/>

If you have any additional questions about the conference, feel free to visit the contact Betsy Giaimo at mgiaim@lsuhsc.edu.

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