

May 2011



# La Voz

The NASPA Latino Knowledge Community Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 2

## NEXT STOP: ARIZONA



### THIS ISSUE:

CATHY ACEVEDO COMADRES CIRCLE REFLECTION

SALUDOS FROM YOUR COCHAIRS

THE COMPADRES CIRCLE—THE RIGHT TIME FOR CHANGE

2011 MENA-VALDEZ AWARDS



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# LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Comadres y Compadres! Felicidades! Un aplauso para todos!

Commencement season is upon us. If we just hang on a little while longer, we can celebrate having completed another successful year on our campuses. Let's count our blessings and remind ourselves of the good work we do as we help usher out a new crop of graduates and begin to welcome the next generation.

We hope you enjoy this post-conference issue and thank those who contributed to share their pre-conference experience with our readers. We are very excited to include an updated LKC Leadership map, as well as introductions to some of our newest team members. We also include a few reflections on our pre-conference experience, the Cathy Acevedo Comadre Circle and the newly named Compadre Circle. We conclude this issue with announcing the winners of the annual Mena-Valdez Latino/a Knowledge Community Awards.

Thank you also to the great response to our call for help in managing our Facebook, Twitter and blog sites. This is your KC and it's nice to see this level of interest and participation. We couldn't provide our updates without you!

Here's to spring! Please enjoy our reflective piece for May and look forward to our July issue with some of our favorite La Voz Signature pieces, and more!

Christa and Cecilia

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# SALUDOS FROM YOUR CO-CHAIRS

Coming off the heels of a great NASPA conference in Philadelphia and our first year as the LKC Co-Chairs, we wanted to provide all of you an update as we head into the summer!

We kicked off the LKC events at NASPA with the Latino/a Institute facilitated by Dr. Liz Palacios and Osvaldo Valle. We thank Liz and Osvaldo for dedicating time and energy to crafting such a thought-provoking and informative pre-conference session. The Cathy Acevedo Comadre Circle provided participants with career mapping, networking roundtables and topical areas in which all Latinas could share about themselves and learn from others. The Compadres Circle gave Latinos the opportunity to discuss navigating the field as men of color and how to get ahead in student affairs. One attendee described it best: "I learned so much – it's difficult to put into words. It has reinforced my passion!" Special thanks to Sara Mata, LKC Assessment Chair, for coordinating the evaluations for the Institute. We look forward to seeing what Naddia Palacios and Terry Mena, our incoming LKC Co-Chairs and Latina/o Institute Coordinators will develop for next year!

The Business Meeting (with a packed room) helped inform the membership on our activities over the past year and current budget. The General Assembly meeting involved action planning and feedback for the 2012 conference in Phoenix. Many thanks to all who signed up to volunteer for the various committees and activities that we are planning this year. Please make sure that you register as a member of the LKC as well!

Our conversations took the spotlight during the conference, with a special session (standing room only) devoted to discussions regarding Arizona SB1070 with NASPA leadership, Sarita Brown from Excelencia in Education, and your very own LKC Co-Chairs. Unfortunately, the fight against legislation targeting undocumented people has only begun. Recently, we were made aware (as many of you have as well) that the state of Georgia has passed a tough immigration law targeting undocumented people, similar to SB 1070 in Arizona. We understand that many of you have concerns with NASPA hosting the Multicultural Institute in December in Atlanta. Be assured that we will speak with the NASPA staff to share and discuss your concerns. Be on the lookout for an official statement from your Co-Chairs!

The LKC Awards Reception coordinated by Dr. Judy Kiyama and the Awards Committee was the best to date. A packed room full of guests, including NASPA President and award recipient Dr. Elizabeth Griego, allowed attendees and recipients to network in a friendly atmosphere that included a dessert table and chocolate fondue! In addition, many of the recipients shared thoughtful words and reflected on the importance of being a member of the LKC community and in Student Affairs. We look forward to Valerie Garcia's vision for the Awards Reception in 2012!

Although the LKC had fantastic exposure to the greater NASPA community this year, we recognize that there were several challenges that prevented us from building stronger connections within the membership during the conference. As your Co-Chairs, we are managing multiple stakeholders: NASPA leadership, the LKC Leadership Team, and our members; as well as coordinating our full-time work responsibilities at our respective institutions. Unfortunately, because we did not have volunteers who offered to coordinate breakfast, lunch, dinner, and after-hours options for the membership during our time in Philadelphia, we were unable to offer this option to you. We recognize that building community is an essential aspect of our LKC and that being together in more social venues is important and valuable to sustaining our members who may be the "only ones in the room" at their institutions. However, we cannot coordinate every event. We need your help!

*Please consider volunteering for the various committees we have available: Assessment Committee, Awards Committee, Conference Host Committee, Latina/o Institute, or Sponsored Programs. Please also consider volunteering within your region. Currently, we are seeking a LKC regional representative for Region IV-W.*

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# SALUDOS FROM YOUR CO-CHAIRS

(Continued from Page 3)

We also wish to congratulate Naddia Palacios and Terry Mena who have been elected as the incoming Co-Chairs for 2012-2014! We look forward to working with you throughout the year! Special thanks to Laura Valdez and members of the Nominating Committee for assisting in the election process.

Many thanks to all who volunteered this past year and contributed to the success of the LKC. We could not do this without you!

Finally, we know April & May are hectic times for all of us on campus. Between final preparations of awards banquets, galas, grading papers, and graduation, we hope that you find time to take care of yourself. Our students look up to us and we need to demonstrate balance in all aspects of the word.

Sigue Pa'lante!

Michelle & Juan

Dr. Juan R. Guardia is the Director of Multicultural Affairs at Florida State University. In his current position, Juan has overall responsibility of all programs and services related to the office. In addition, he is also Adjunct Faculty in the Higher Education graduate program within the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies in the FSU College of Education. You can reach him at [jguardia@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:jguardia@admin.fsu.edu).

Dr. Michelle M. Espino serves as an Assistant Professor of College Student Affairs Administration at the University of Georgia in the Counseling & Human Development Services Department. She can be reached at [mespino@uga.edu](mailto:mespino@uga.edu).

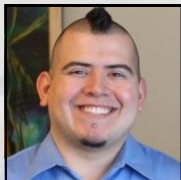
## MEET OUR NEW TEAM MEMBERS

**Name:** Ally De la Cruz ([adelacruz@housing.ucsb.edu](mailto:adelacruz@housing.ucsb.edu))

**Position and Institution:** Resident Director, University of California, Santa Barbara

**Role in LKC:** Co-Chair, Sponsored Programs Committee

**Goals for the year:** With the annual NASPA conference in Arizona next year it is imperative that the LKC sponsor a variety of programs that focus on issues that directly speak to our community and allies. The committee encourages program submissions that will educate the NASPA community on issues such as SB1070's implication on higher education, diversity within the Latina/o experience, and innovative ways to sustain our students, staff, and faculty who identify as Latina/o.



**Name:** Tomás Sanchez ([tsanchez@uvm.edu](mailto:tsanchez@uvm.edu))

**Position and Institution:** Assistant Director for Residential Life, University of Vermont

**Role in LKC:** Region I Knowledge Community Representative for the Latino/a KC

**About me:** Having been in the area for several years, I hope to continue to provide social connections, continued professional development on how we can better serve our students and advance the New England Latino Student Leadership conference as it enters its tenth year.

**Name:** Valerie Garcia ([vgarcia@fgcu.edu](mailto:vgarcia@fgcu.edu))

**Position and Institution:** Assistant Director of New Student Programs, Florida Gulf Coast University

**Role in LKC:** Chair, Awards Committee

**Goals for the year:** The awards committee hopes to organize a memorable Mena-Valdez Awards Reception and to recognize individuals who continue to support the LKC and Latinos/as in Higher Education.



**Name:** Ben Meoz ([benjamin.meoz@cornell.edu](mailto:benjamin.meoz@cornell.edu))

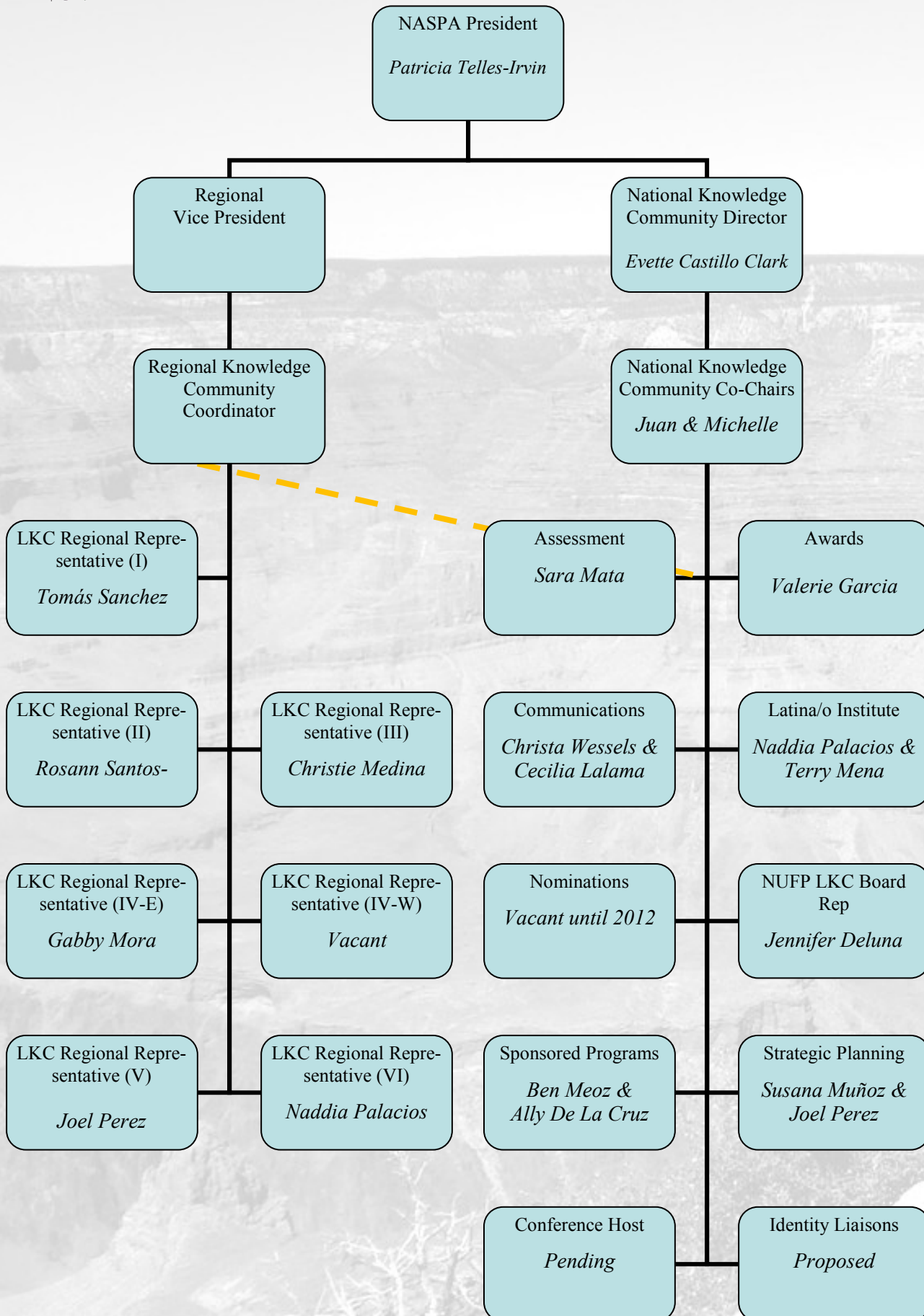
**Position and Institution:** Residence Hall Director - The Latino Living Center, Cornell University

**Role in LKC:** Co-Chair, Sponsored Programs Committee

**Goals for the year:** I'm excited about playing a more active role in the LKC and hope to see many NASPA program proposals put forward by members of our community. This year will especially be interesting as the programs we review and sponsor will be one more important way the LKC's will show its presence at the conference in Phoenix, AZ. Alejandra and I look forward to being in touch with you all to help support you in your processes of creating proposals and sessions that will enrich the 2012 conference and our field.



# NUESTRE LIDERES



# FOOD FOR THE SOUL



As a three-year attendee of the annual NASPA conference, I registered for this year's Latino Knowledge Community's pre-conference workshop, "Intenciones: Making Each Step Count." In previous years I felt like I was always missing a piece of the NASPA LKC experience and heard the preconference was where the best connections were made.

The Latino/a Knowledge Community (LKC) sponsored the pre-conference to focus on current trends and topics of Latino/a issues in higher education. After a morning of introductions, the males and females in attendance were split in to different rooms. The women joined in the fourth annual "Cathy Acevedo Comadres Circle" while the men went to the "Compadre Circle" (formerly known as the Latino Male Summit).

In the Comadre Circle, a panel of Latinas at different places in their career were asked to share their stories and answer questions about their experience as professionals. Dr. Elizabeth Palacios, Dean of Student Development at Baylor University, facilitated the panel discussion.

One of our panelists spoke about her experience on Semester at Sea during her undergraduate years that helped her expand her global perspective. After her semester voyage, she started her masters program and is currently job searching. She advised all professionals to encourage their students to study abroad and take the opportunity to expand their horizon behind the United States.

Astrid Beltran, Coordinator of Greek Life for NPHC & MGC at Baylor University, shared her experience of growing up and being told that she was not Latina enough by Latino counterparts. She talked about becoming comfortable in her own skin; and coming to terms with the fact that she could love country music and novelas at the same time. Having the ability to navigate both worlds has enabled her to better relate to those around her and serve her students in a trans-cultural manner.

Michelle Espino, Assistant Professor in the College of Education at the University of Georgia talked about her experience earning her doctorate and some of the backlash received from cohort members that implied a preference towards her work in comparison to others due to her ethnicity. She talked about being a Latina faculty member and about the importance of creating a support network while working on your professional goals, whatever they may be.

Mary Jo Gonzales, Associate Dean of Students at Iowa State University, shared her journey in an institution where being the only Latina meant she was the highest ranked Latina administrator. The political savvy she learned there prepared her for the challenges she faces at Iowa State.

Mary Jo said something that stuck with me when talking about the job search: "Go where you are needed, not where you are wanted." She talked about how pushing ourselves to go to the places where few of us are present can inspire Latino students to succeed academically by having us as an example.

Listening to these strong, courageous and talented women speak was a great energizer for the rest of the day and conference. In our community, we highly value family. In the Comadre Circle it's easy to feel like you've just joined a network of women that welcome you with open arms. The group is certainly a force to be reckoned with in the field of student affairs. Registration to this pre-conference gets you more than just lectures and panels, participants walk away with great memories, new connections and a sense of belonging to a professional family.

*Jamie Rodriguez is a Residence Director at Syracuse University. She is also the Creative Director for and contributes monthly to our blog, Blogging La Voz,. She can be reached at [ylrodrig@syr.edu](mailto:ylrodrig@syr.edu).*



# REFLECTIONS ON THE 2011 COMPADRES CIRCLE



I must admit that for the first time in a long time I was nervous to put on a presentation. You see, the Compadres Circle had undergone much change...beginning with its name (it used to be called the Latino Male Summit). A lot of preparation went into creating a pre-conference workshop for my colleagues that would encompass professional development, personal growth and be culturally relevant. For me, the stakes were high because it was my first endeavor working with the Latino Knowledge Community within NASPA. Up until this point, all of my work with knowledge communities involved either the GLBT or Technology KC and of course...the Men & Masculinities Knowledge Community.

The day arrived and the Latino professionals trickled into the conference room. Many were excited to reconnect with friends and colleagues. For others, it was their first pre-conference. During the morning sessions, the pre-conference splits up by gender and the men went to another room for a morning of camaraderie and fellowship. I was nervous that our first activity—an icebreaker—would be a dud. I had utilized the *Gendered Circle* icebreaker on several occasions and with great success, but recognizing that it wasn't for every group. For all my reservations, it was a success! The Latino men in the room shared and opened up to some really sensitive and relieving gender-based questions. The icebreaker went so well, several people asked if I would share it with them electronically. I was very proud and that icebreaker was just the beginning of morning of sharing, learning, networking and *hermandad*.

We discussed career mapping, an opportunity to think about our own professional goals for the next three, five and ten years. This activity helped to facilitate great discussions, especially because our group included graduate students, people about to graduate, new and mid-level professionals, unit directors and several Senior Student Affairs Officers. All the Compadres shared their experiences in job selection, seeking promotions, moving to other regions of the country and balancing work / life issues.

We also discussed an important, yet, sensitive topic within our profession; *Navigating the Field as a Man of Color*. Maneuvering through the academy is no minor feat for any faculty or staff member, however, the task is even more challenging for those who have to respond to both subtle and overt forms of racism, sexism and homophobia. Sadly, these experiences are not unique to only universities in certain regions of the U.S., or to smaller colleges, but are rooted in the university culture. Latinos in general have to know how to tactfully maneuver these situations. Attendees shared experiences and learning moments from mistakes made by other colleagues and how not to repeat their mistakes.

As I recount that morning's events, I can remember all of the laughter, opinions, thoughts, comments and support that were expressed that day.

To conclude, I leave you with these thoughts from one of the Compadres Circle attendees:

*"The Compadres Circle is family time... time to grow, time to share, time to learn.*

*The Compadres Circle is where I go to recharge, re-energize, and re-new my commitment to being a servant-leader in the Chicano/a community."*

—Benjamin Mills, University of Arizona

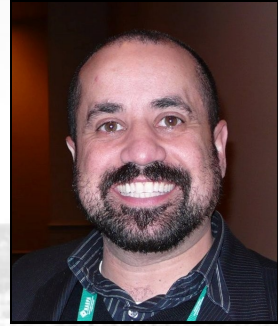
Post Script: After grabbing a quick lunch and running back to the conference center to set up for the afternoon sessions with my co-coordinator Dr. Elizabeth Palacios, I returned to the Compadres Circle conference room and found about a dozen of the Compadres had reconvened to continue that morning's discussions. It was a wonderful sight and testament to the power and success of the Latino Institute's pre-conference program.

*Oswaldo Del Valle is a Learning Community Coordinator at Cal Poly University in San Luis Obispo, California. He is also the Conference Co-Chair for the Region 6 Latina/o Knowledge Community Drive-In Conference to be held at Claremont University Consortium on June 25, 2011, in Claremont, CA.*

# THE COMPADRES CIRCLE

## THE RIGHT TIME FOR CHANGE

At the 2011 NASPA Conference, the Latino/a Knowledge Community's Latino Institute once again provided an opportunity to its membership and their allies to come together. For the fifth year in a row, members were able to come together for all-day, in depth discussion on issues relating to Latinos/as in the field of Student Affairs. Osvaldo Del Valle chaired the Compadres Circle and Dr. Elizabeth Palacios chaired Cathy Acevedo Comadres Circle.



The Compadres Circle (formerly known as the Latino Male Summit) had a transformation. The Latino Institute took a serious look at the structure of the Latino Male Summit and decided to implement some changes at the 2011 Conference in Philadelphia:

- Change of name—since its inception, the gathering of Latino men at NASPA's annual conference was known as the Latino Male Summit. The decision was made to change the name to the Compadres Circle for two important reasons: (1) the word "male" has biological implications and therefore excludes our Transgendered brothers; the word "compadres" eliminates this exclusion. (2) The word "compadres" is more in line with the name of the women's summit called the Cathy Acevedo Comadres Circle; this change demonstrates symmetry and unity at the summits.
- Deliberate inclusivity—many comments from last year's assessment requested that the summit bring about something to help make our gay and bisexual men feel more included in the dialogue and process of the summit.
- Gender/Identity discussion—One of the biggest requests from last year's assessment was a call for information on how we as Latino men navigate our gender and gender development. Sections of the Compadres Summit discussed issues of gender identity and performance in both our professional and personal lives.
- More structure—this year, a mission statement was created that gave a clear direction for the Compadres Circle to follow in the future. The mission is as follows—  
***The mission of the Compadres Circle will be to provide a safe space for Latino identified men to come together in fellowship to learn and share experience of being gendered men of color in the field of Student Affairs. The Compadres Circle is founded upon a pro-feminist, anti-racist, gay-affirmative agenda with the hope of providing resources to increase multicultural competence among professional staff & graduate students by providing Latino men with tools to invite and engage others into this process.***
- Learning Objectives—eight learning objectives were created to help gear the Compadres Circle. These eight points were in line with the mission statement and reinforced the commitment to inclusivity, gender & cultural identity development. Participants will:
  - Learn of issues relevant to Latino men in the field of Student Affairs that will assist with our professional development.
  - Reflect on personal and professional roles and goals in student affairs.
  - Develop an understanding of masculinities issues as they relate to our personal and professional development.
  - Develop an understanding of masculinities issues as they relate to our male student's learning, engagement, leadership development and retention.
  - Gain knowledge for developing individual plans for career success and advancement.
  - Develop skills for mentoring Latino men in the field from the graduate student level all the way up to and including SSAOs.
  - Develop skills for mentoring the students we work with at our respective institutions.
  - Foster a community of understanding and appreciation for issues pertaining to Latinos/as in higher education.
- More components to the pre-conference that discussed professional development within the field.
- Opportunities for mentorship.

It was with great anticipation that we awaited the results of the assessment of this year's conference and were pleased that the changes implemented for both the Compadres and Comadres Circle(s) and the afternoon sessions were well received.

Osvaldo Del Valle is a Learning Community Coordinator at Cal Poly University- San Luis Obispo. He can be reached at [odelvall@calpoly.edu](mailto:odelvall@calpoly.edu)

# 2011 MENA-VALDEZ AWARDS

At the 2011 NASPA Annual Conference members and friends of the Latino/a Knowledge Community gathered to celebrate at the Mena-Valdez Awards Ceremony. At this year's awards ceremony, guests enjoyed a variety of food that was provided by funding through NASPA and those who were in attendance also enjoyed a special spoken word performance by Denice Frohman (aka "Ms. Misconception"). In addition, several outstanding individuals were recognized for their contributions to higher education and the Latino Knowledge Community. The 2011 awards recipients, include:

## **Amigo Award**

Dr. Elizabeth Griego  
University of the Pacific

## **Outstanding Faculty Award**

Dr. Frankie Santos Laanan  
Iowa State University

## **Outstanding New Professional Award**

Christa Wessels  
Lehigh University

## **Outstanding Mid-Level Professional Award**

Alexander González  
University of New Mexico

## **Outstanding Senior Student Affairs Officer**

Dr. Timothy Alvarez  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Thank you to those who were in attendance and many thanks to the awards recipients for your commitment and contributions to Latinos/as in higher education. We hope to see you in Phoenix at next year's Mena-Valdez Awards Ceremony!

*Valerie Garcia, M.Ed. is the Assistant Director for the Office of New Student Programs at Florida Gulf Coast University. Valerie is also the incoming Chair for the Awards Committee for 2011-2012. She can be reached at [vgarica@gfcu.edu](mailto:vgarica@gfcu.edu).*



# La Voz Communications