

News Release

For Release: Feb. 24, 2015

Contact: Kristal Griffith

Email: kgriffith@naspa.org

Phone: (202) 265-7500 ext. 1177



University of Nebraska assistant director receives NASPA award

Sara Mata recipient of the Ruth Strang Research Award

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Each year, NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, recognizes members who are doing outstanding work in the student affairs profession. Sara A. Mata, assistant director of the office of academic success and intercultural services at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, is the 2015 recipient of the Ruth Strang Research Award from NASPA.

The award, sponsored by the NASPA Foundation and the Center for Women, recognizes individuals for outstanding contributions to the body of literature concerning women in higher education. This award encourages high-quality research related to women in higher education and seeks to promote research by, for, and about women.

Mata's research, "Discourses of a Cancer Diagnosis: Narratives of Women in Academia," was selected by judges on the Center for Women Board. The study explored the experiences of female faculty members diagnosed with breast cancer to provide voice and visibility for women in these circumstances and how they maneuvered the gendered institutional structure of higher education. Mata used online journaling and photovoice to examine how being in a tenure-track role, influenced by the inequities of gender and power contributing to the landscape of academia, accompanied with a life-threatening diagnosis of breast cancer, influenced the women.

"The author provides an intriguing set of methods to gather data on faculty women who have survived breast cancer," one judge said. "This study offers a unique contribution, as there are few studies that focus on this area in the hopes of creating more welcoming and supportive environments for women who are diagnosed."

Mata will be honored March 23 at Center for Women/Women in Student Affairs reception during the 2015 NASPA Annual Conference in New Orleans, La. She will be awarded \$500 and her article will be considered for publication in the *NASPA Journal about Women in Higher Education*.

The Center for Women named this award in honor of Dr. Ruth Strang, 1895-1971, author, educator, and recipient of the 1977 NASPA Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Literature of Higher Education, which she received posthumously for her commitment to the advancement of women in higher education and Student Affairs. If you would like to donate to the Ruth Strang award, please visit the [Foundation gift site](#).

-30-

NASPA is the leading association for the advancement, health, and sustainability of the student affairs profession. Our work provides high-quality professional development, advocacy, and research for 13,000 members in all 50 states, 25 countries, and 8 U.S. territories.