

News Release

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***Excelencia in Education* President given National Award from NASPA**

Sarita Brown given Outstanding Contribution to Higher Education 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. Sarita Brown, president of *Excelencia in Education*, is the recipient of the 2016 NASPA Outstanding Contribution to Higher Education Award. The award recognizes someone whose service in programs, policies, and research have made a national impact and contributed to the broad research of higher education.

Brown co-founded *Excelencia in Education* in 2004. The not-for-profit organization accelerates Latino success in higher education by linking research, policy, and practice to serve Latino students. The organization has become a trusted source of data and information on the status of Latino higher educational achievement, a major resource for influencing policy at the state and national levels, and a widely recognized advocate for expanding promising practices to accelerate Latino student success in college.

“For me, it’s always been about student success,” says Brown. “When we founded *Excelencia in Education* in 2004, we believed we could make a difference for America by focusing on solid information about what works to increase Latino student success in higher education. Then, by bringing diverse stakeholders from government, higher education institutions, businesses, community organizations, philanthropy and the media together with practical research and promoting collective action we’d build a brighter future. Recognition from NASPA is a tribute to the staying power of this vision. It’s especially meaningful to receive this recognition from student affairs professionals whose work is so essential to the success of so many students.”

Her writing on the impact for Latino college-going talent includes her chapter; “Making the Next Generation Our Greatest Resource” in *Latinos in the Nation’s Future* (2009) edited by Henry Cisneros and published by Arte Público Press.

Brown has spent more than two decades at prominent national educational institutions and at the highest levels of government working to implement effective strategies to raise academic achievement and opportunity for low-income and minority students. She started her career at the University of Texas at Austin by building a national model promoting minority success in graduate education. Coming to the nation’s capital to work for educational associations, Brown was appointed in 1997 as Executive Director of the White House Initiative for Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans under President Bill Clinton and U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley.

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Her work has been nationally recognized, including with the Harold G. McGraw Jr. Prize in Education for her “innovative thinking, strong leadership and accomplishment by example” and the American Association of University Women. She has been awarded an honorary doctor of humane letters from North Carolina State University and honorary doctor of humane letters in behavioral sciences from Carlos Albizu University.

Brown and the other National Award winners will be honored in March at the 2016 NASPA Annual Conference in Indianapolis, Ind.

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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 15,000 members in all 50 states, 25 countries, and 8 U.S. territories.