Pushing the Needle toward Hispanic Student Success: Empowering Heritage Spanish Speakers beyond Access into Degree Completion

Empowering Hispanic students through a Heritage Spanish Speaking course that partners with a college counselor and a community college trustee to promote formal literacy in Spanish and intellectual potential. Thus, enabling the student to transfer mastery of linguistic skills and intellectual capital to other languages and subject areas and successfully progress toward course completion and degree attainment.


Our Presenters

RCCD Trustee Mary Figueroa was first elected to the Riverside Community College District Board of Trustees on November 7, 1995, having emerged from a crowded field of 11 candidates and one open seat. Trustee Figueroa was last re-elected by voters in November 2008 and is past president of the Board of Trustees. Ms. Figueroa’s community involvement began at the age of 16, when she volunteered for a local election campaign in order to earn high school credit in a government class. From there, she became involved in the neighborhood youth organizations formed in the 1970’s to deal with local community gang activity and police conflict.

Dr. Bonavita Quinto-MacCallum is an associate professor of Spanish, Humanities & Social Sciences, and project director of the Title V for Public Safety Education and Training at Ben Clark Training Center for Moreno Valley College. She has been with Moreno Valley College since 2005 and with the Riverside Community College District since 2000. Dr. Quinto-MacCallum has taught in several subject areas in public schools, community colleges, and universities throughout the southwest for over 26 years. She has specialized in Spanish for Heritage Speakers for 13 years. Dr. Quinto-MacCallum holds a bachelor’s degree with a dual major in Communicative Disorders, Speech Language Pathology and Spanish, and a masters’ degree in Spanish Linguistics from the University of New Mexico, and as a W.K. Kellogg fellow with the Hispanic Border Leadership Institute, she then completed her doctor of philosophy in Educational Administration from New Mexico State University.

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Moreno Valley College Silvia Trejo is an Academic Counselor, Assistant Professor and Coordinator for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). She has extensive experience working with low income and first generation student support and retention services. She was awarded the Estrella Award for Outstanding Educator from the Moreno Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in 2010 and the Moreno Valley College Adjunct Faculty of the Year in 2009. Trejo earned her associate degree from Riverside City College and went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in Sociology from San Diego State University and a masters’ degree in Guidance and Educational Counseling from CSU, San Bernardino. As a first generation Latina college graduate she is passionate about inspiring students to reach their fullest potential in college and in life. She has a four-year-old daughter who is very curious and will one day be a scientist or engineer.

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