

LATINO AMERICAN COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED IN 1972 | SPRING 2013 NEWSLETTER | WWW.LATINOAC.NEBRASKA.GOV



Mission Statement: The mission of the Latino - American Commission is to serve as a voice in the Nebraska State Government for Latino Americans/ Latinos.

Vision Statement: The vision of the Latino - American Commission is to empower the Latino Community through a pro-active approach to issues that affect their access to educational, political, economical and social opportunities in Nebraska.

2013 Nebraska National Hispanic Scholars

The National Hispanic Recognition Program (NHRP) has bestowed two Nebraskan high school graduates with the title of National Hispanic Scholar making them two of 5,000 Latino students nationwide to receive this honor.

To qualify, the students had to have taken the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) in October of their junior year of high school, be at least one-quarter Hispanic/Latino, be an American citizen or permanent resident, achieve the minimum required PSAT/NMSQT cutoff score and have a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale.

The PSAT/NMSQT is a standardized test administered by the College Board that provides firsthand practice for the SAT Reasoning Test by measuring critical reading skills, writing skills and mathematical problem-solving skills.

Although being named a National Hispanic Scholar does not provide a financial reward, the title is prestigious and the list of Hispanic Scholars is sent to colleges and universities nationwide.



Itahi Sanchez (left) and Matthew Cervantes (right) are Nebraska's two National Hispanic Scholars for 2013.

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NLAC joins the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture

The Nebraska Latino American Commission (NLAC) has become a member of the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture (NALAC), the only national non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to the promotion, advancement, development, and cultivation of the Latino arts field in the United States.

Founded in 1989, NALAC was born from a common vision shared by a group of prominent Latino and Latina artists who represented numerous arts disciplines, ethnic heritages, and geographic regions. These artists recognized the necessity of a national organization focused on advocacy on behalf of the under-served Latino arts sector.

NLAC understands the role and value of Latino art and culture and is seeking opportunities to educate and enhance the art community with Latino culture and influence here in Nebraska.

In 2012, two NLAC representatives, Commissioner Chabella Guzman and NLAC Public Information Officer Jasel Cantu attended the NALAC National Conference in Philadelphia, PA with the partnership of the Nebraska Arts Council. While there, the NLAC representatives saw potential in collaborating with NALAC who offers leadership initiatives, training programs, grants, and the opportunity to network with Latino organizations and artists nationwide.

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Lazaro Arturo Spindola
NLAC Executive Director

Latino American Commission Commissioners

Yolanda Nuncio (Chair)

Chabella Guzman (Vice-Chair)

Chandra Diaz DeBose (Secretary)

Norma de la O

Jack Gutierrez

Ralph Hauke, M.D., FACP

Gisella Munoz

Ramon Otero

Leticia Rodriguez

Jose Santos

NLAC Staff

Lazaro Arturo Spindola, M.D.
Executive Director

Jasel Cantu
Public Information Officer

Dora Lima
Staff Assistant

Visit Our Website:
www.latinoac.nebraska.gov

A Message from the Executive Director

Buenos Dias,

This past Spring and early Summer has been very busy for the Commission.

We were involved and watching the legislative session all the way to the end on June 5, 2013 where we testified on many bills and the Racial Profiling Bill we worked on with Senator Mello is now law. We are already getting ready for the 2014 legislative session. If there is a law or issue that you feel needs to be addressed please let us know.

Even though the session is done, that does mean you have to wait until next year to voice your opinion to your senator. If there is a local or national issue you are concerned about, please contact your local senator and share your concerns and let them know what you would like for them to do about this issue. You can find all of the senator's contact information on www.nebraska.gov, including a chart on how to find your district representative.

The Summer may be slow and a time to relax, but not for us. We worked with the College of St. Mary to help plan and organize the 2013 Latina Summer Academy, we joined the Hate Crime Advisory Task Force with the Dept. of Justice; Dr. Roger Breed, former director of the Department of Education received our report on Latino parental involvement, the Minority Justice Committee has held a number of Focus Groups facilitated by the Commission over interpreter availability within the court system. We continue our work with the Governor's Human Trafficking Task Force and many other projects. The Commission is here for you.

Our next issue will include information on our upcoming Hispanic Heritage Month State Commemoration and how you can participate. If you have ideas for the Commemoration, now is the time to tell us.

Dr. Arturo Spindola

Cesar Chavez Day Proclamation



From left to right: Community Activist Dr. Marty Ramirez, NLAC Public Information Officer Jasel Cantu, NLAC Staff Assistant Dora Lima, Governor Dave Heineman and NLAC Director Dr. Arturo Spindola.

On March 13, 2013 Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman signed a Proclamation declaring March 31, 2013 as Cesar Chavez Day for Service and Learning in the state of Nebraska. The Proclamation was signed in a public ceremony at the Capitol Building and arranged by the Latino American Commission. Present at the ceremony included Commission staff and former Commissioner Dr. Marty Ramirez who marched alongside Cesar Chavez and considered him a friend. After being presented with the Proclamation, Commission Director Dr. Spindola shared a brief history of Cesar Chavez and explained how his pursuit of fair and equal treatment for all workers continues to affect all Americans to this day.

NLAC Welcomes New Commissioner from Columbus

The Nebraska Latino American Commission (NLAC) welcomes Jack Gutierrez of Columbus as the newest Commissioner to serve on the Board of Directors.

Gutierrez is originally from Lexington, Nebraska. He earned his bachelor's degree in Education from Chadron State College in 1976 and a master's degree in Education from the University of Nebraska-Kearney (UNK) in 1980.

"I have been interested in becoming a member of the Latino-American Commission because I believe my experience and commitment to education, and especially the need to see our youth grow, is of the utmost importance," said Gutierrez.

"My mother, Jennie Gutierrez, was on the Mexican-American Commission Board years ago. I believe my name is out there in many different circles to make a difference and to continue the good things that are happening in the state with our population."

During his student career, he worked as a Physical Education Graduate Assistant for the 1979-80 school year at UNK. His career as a teacher includes teaching middle school English and Math at St. Ann's Catholic School in Lexington from 1976 to 1979.

He currently works at Central Community College (CCC) in Columbus, Nebraska as the college's Athletic Director. His career at CCC began in 1980 where he has worn many hats including the CCC Financial Aid Director, Admissions Director, and Campus Recruiter.

He also coached the CCC basketball team from 1980-2007, and cur-



Jack Gutierrez

rently coaches the CCC women's softball team.

"I have been very instrumental in the inception of a men's soccer program at CCC which will start in the fall of 2013," said Gutierrez. "With our soccer program we have attracted and given the opportunity for many Latino males to attend college and play soccer, with 20 of 25 incoming soccer players being Latino."

"I plan to be very involved with their progress as a student-athlete in their two years at Central. I am very involved in my work at Central Community College and would like to carry over my strengths in education to the Latino-American Commission."

His service to the community includes being a member of the Sertoma Service Club of Columbus, the ARC of Platte County Club, which works with adults and children with disabilities, and volunteers for the Teammate Program. He is the current president of the Pinnacle Bank Bullets summer softball association and past president of the Big Pals-Little Pals of Greater Columbus.

Gutierrez is married with three children. His wife, Kelly, works at East Central District Health Department. His eldest son, Drew, works for the Autistic Center of Nebraska, his son Jake attends Versatile Support Services and works on life skills, and his youngest, daughter Jaisa, currently attends the University of Nebraska-Omaha and is majoring in Environmental Science.

"The college experience is a positive influence for all youth and making friends while learning is something that is a must for all college students," he said.

Barrientos Scholarship Foundation Nominations

The Barrientos Scholarship Foundation is currently requesting the public to submit nominations for the 2013 Latino Heritage Awards.

The event recognizes individuals who have made contributions to the Latino community in the Omaha, Neb. metropolitan area. There are five categories: Business, Community, Lifetime Achievement and Man and Woman of the Year.

The Barrientos Scholarship Foundation has hosted the Latino Heritage Awards since 2005. The awards dinner is the primary fundraiser for the Barrientos Scholarship, which has helped award over \$60,000 in scholarships to more than 80 students. This year's Awards will take place on October 10, 2013 at the College of St. Mary in Omaha.

All nominations must be submitted before Friday, August 9, 2013. To nominate an individual, please fill out a nomination form at: <http://www.barrientos scholarship.org/awards/nominate.asp>

The following Awards are only limited to a Latino or Latina, and is open to those who have not received an Award within the last 3 years:

Lifetime Achievement

- Has contributed to the Latino Community in Nebraska for more than 20 years, at least 5 in Nebraska;

- Contribution has empowered members of the community;
- Contribution has aided community self-sustainability;
- Has shown high morals, ethical values and standards.

Latino / Latina of the Year

- Is a role model and influenced change within the community;
- Influence has proven to be a tool for community betterment.

The following Awards are open to everyone:

Latino for Community

This recognition is given to an organization or to an individual who has excelled in one of the following areas: The Arts, Advocacy, Health / Prevention and Mentoring.

Service

- Has offered community service throughout the past year and the provided service has made a difference in the community;
- Has been a role model in the community;
- Has been active in, but not limited to, fields such as the public sector, education, non-profit, community based services, etc.

Business of the Year

- Welcomed the Latino community by initiatives through products or services and contributed to the betterment of the community;
- Has provided opportunities for Latino professional advancement.

2013 National Hispanic Scholars Continued

Matthew Cervantes

Matthew Cervantes, 18, is from Papillion and a recent graduate of Creighton Preparatory Academy in Omaha, Ne. He graduated with a 4.0 GPA and graduated in the top 5 percent of his class.

"I wasn't aware that there was a Hispanic Scholar recognition, I was excited," said Cervantes upon learning of his Hispanic Scholar status.

"I do what I do not for recognition or awards I do it because I was taught it was right thing to do. I had a rigorous course schedule with a lot of AP classes. My parents always encouraged me to do my best and so I always try to do my very best and I study a lot with my younger brother. I do my homework right away every night."

His school achievements include the Holy Cross Scholar Award and being a member of the Campus Ministry Advisory Board, Prep Accepts, a diversity promotional student group, and Green Circle where they teach acceptance of fellow students.

He also spent one week in Pueblo, Mexico planting crops, tutoring children and building Adobe outhouses for local residents as part of a school and community organization project.

He says finding the right balance with family, faith and friends are important.

"Focus and dedicate your time to grades and remember that if you put everything into what you do that success is not far behind. I encourage everyone to find a balance on academic rigor and balance other aspects in life," he said.

Cervantes's fraternal family can trace their roots to Mexico and his maternal family is originally from India.

"I'm pretty proud of my heritage and where I come from; I am Hispanic and Indian. In our household and in my extended family there's a difference of cultures and ideas and it's nice."

"I meet different people everyday and I feel lucky my background is something interesting but does not define me," he said.

He has advice for Latino students who have experienced negativity based on their ethnicity and background.

"Some people get hung up on culture and race, I've been to places where stereotypes of Hispanics can be rough," said Cervantes.

"Your culture is something to be proud of, it's good to meet as many different people as you can and meet people with an open mind. I'd tell anyone who felt that because of something that made them different; race, religion, etc. that if they're true to themselves and try their best they shall never feel any reason to be afraid to succeed in life."

Cervantes is attending the University of Notre Dame in Notre Dame, Indiana. He plans to study biology and attend medical school.

Itahi Sanchez

Itahi Sanchez, 17, just recently graduated from Lincoln High School in Lincoln, Ne. among the top percentile of her class. She also earned the additional title of National Merit Finalist from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

"I feel accomplished and I'm just proud of my achievement," said Sanchez. "I'm excited because I know this will get me a chance of a scholarship at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln, the Chancellor's Scholarship, that's tuition plus \$2,000...to get that you have to be a finalist in the National Merit Scholarship."

At the University of Nebraska – Lincoln (UNL), Sanchez would like to study biochemistry, and plans to attend graduate school. She became interested in biochemical research while studying fungi and chemicals while participating in EnvironMentors at UNL, an environment-based mentoring program that encourages underserved youth to explore an environmental education and career.

Sanchez wants to continue studying fungi for medical research purposes.

Sanchez's parents are originally from Oaxaca, Mexico and settled in Lincoln in 1990. The youngest of seven children, Sanchez and her family are Mixtec, meaning they are of indigenous Mesoamerican people from certain states of Mexico. Their lineage also includes Spanish and African ancestry.

"Be proud of your history," advises Sanchez to fellow Latino students. "Research what your ancestors did, it can be very inspiring. I have a great-grandparent who led a rebellion in Oaxaca; there was a valley that had been under the rule of conquistadors and (the Mixtecos) led a rebellion and got the valley back for their own people; that's inspiring."

While in school, she was an officer in the Astronomy Club, a member of the National Honor Society, an editor for her school newspaper all four years of high school, participated in UNL's Upward Bound and was on the school's Slam Poetry Team. On weekends, she volunteered at the Cat House.

Looking back, Sanchez admits her achievements were difficult to attain but was worth the hard work and sacrifice.

"I have a hard time dealing with stress so I had to keep getting myself over the feeling that I can't do it all, I had to set realistic limits. Learning is what motivates me most, not just the GPA. I do try to focus, I find a good quiet place and get rid of distractions like texting and Facebook," she said.

Now a graduate, Sanchez has advice for underclassmen: "Focus on your strengths and make the most of it, even if your strength isn't test-taking, work on what you are good at...find your niche, and it will bring out the best in you."

Hispanic Heritage Month Planning Committee

The 2013 Hispanic Heritage Month State Commemoration Planning Committee has been meeting since May to plan and organize the upcoming State Commemoration.

The 2013 Hispanic Heritage Month State Commemoration Planning Committee Co-Chairs are Dr. Arturo Spindola and Jasel Cantu. The members are:

- Amberlyn Edson
- Roger Garcia
- Ronald Hoagland
- Jani Martinez
- Loren Mestre-Roberts
- Scott Shafer
- Bennie Shobe

Several members were active on the 2012 Committee including Ronald Hoagland, Jani Martinez, Scott Shafer and Bennie Shobe. Ronald Hoagland and Bennie Shobe are also members of the the Martin Luther King Breakfast and Commemoration Planning Committee. Scott Shafer oversees the Chief Standing Bear Breakfast.

Amberlyn Edson is an account manager from Omaha and has been volunteering at El Centro de las Americas for years where she is an ESL

Instructor and assists with the GED program.

Jani Martinez returns to serve as an active member as well as Assistant to Chair Cantu. Martinez is a political science student at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln and is representing the student body on the Committee. She is active with several Latino-based student organizations on campus.

Roger Garcia is the Executive Director of El Centro de las Americas and has been volunteering the El Centro facility as the location for the bi-monthly meetings. He brings his experience of organizing and promoting community and city events in Omaha.

Loren Mestre-Roberts is the Community Outreach Coordinator for the City of Lincoln and is involved in volunteering and promoting many events beneficial to the Latino community in Lincoln.

Ronald Hoagland is assists and mentors student organizations and fraternities at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln, organizing and presenting events and scholarships. Bennie Shobe is active with the community for student events, scholarships and voter education. Scott Shafer oversees and organizes the Youth Leadership program with the Indian Affairs Commission helping Native high school students.

“NALAC” Continued From Page 1

“NALAC has shown promise and benefit to the Commission and our constituents,” said NLAC Director, Dr. Spindola. “When the opportunity to become a member was presented, we chose to become an affiliate. We can include them along with National Council of La Raza as national Latino-based organizations the Commission is an affiliate with and whose membership allows us to represent Nebraska nationally.”

NALAC’s membership is a multiethnic, multigenerational, and interdisciplinary community that includes thousands of Latino artists and more than 900 large and small not-for-profit Latino arts and cultural organizations in the United States.

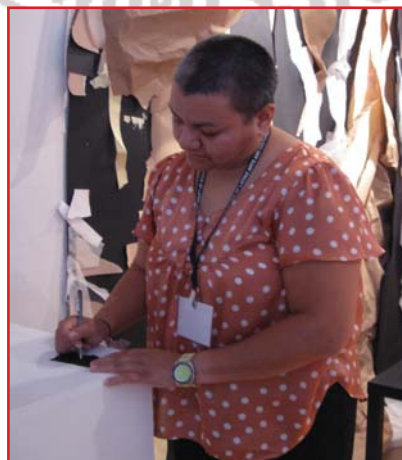
NALAC artists and arts organizations specialize in a diverse range of disciplines, which include visual arts, theater, dance, music, perfor-

mance art, literature, and mixed media.

The NALAC Board of Directors are made up of artists, academics and museum directors across the nation. In 2013, President Obama appointed NALAC Executive Director Maria Lopez de Leon to serve on the National Council of the Arts.

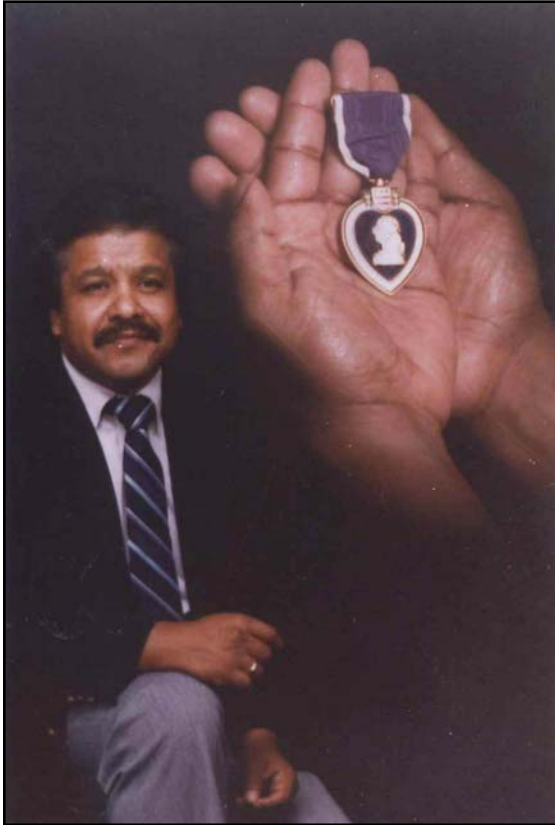
The Latino American Commission is currently the only Nebraska organization that is a member of NALAC.

Jasel Cantu and Chabella Guzman (left) at the Welcome Ceremony of the NALAC Conference in Philadelphia, PA. (Center) Chabella Guzman participates in an art exhibit on immigration. (Right) The President of the Kennedy Center hosts a breakout session on exhibitions.



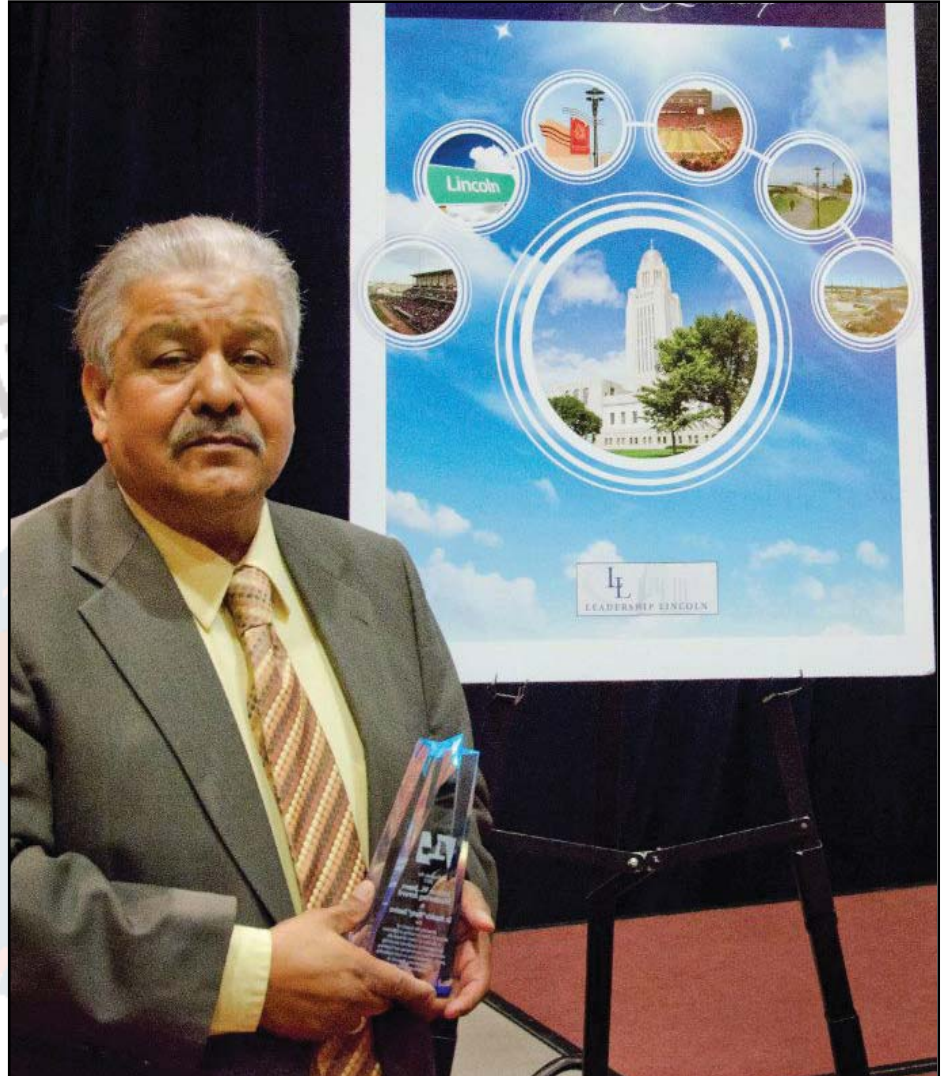
Pieces of Nebraskan Hispanic History

Dr. Mauricio “Marty” Ramirez



Dr. Marty Ramirez (above) poses with his Purple Heart awarded from the Vietnam War. (Right) Dr. Martinez In February 2013 was awarded the Melvin W. Jones Mentoring Award in Lincoln.

Dr. Ramirez currently appears on “The Latino Perspective” television show in Omaha. For more information, visit www.tvlatinanebraska.com



The following article was originally published by the Scottsbluff Star Herald on Feb. 23, 2013. The article is reprinted below with permission from the newspaper.

A Scottsbluff native and a Chadron State College graduate, Dr. Marty Ramirez, was among those honored at the Lincoln Celebration of Community Leadership program on Thursday, Feb. 21, in Lincoln.

Ramirez received the Melvin W. Jones Mentoring Award. It was given to recognize how he has encouraged and inspired individuals through the development of mentoring relationships. He was also honored for promoting diversity in community leadership.

Ramirez retired after working 38 years at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He earned a bachelor's degree at Chadron State in 1967 and received both his master's degree and a doctorate from UNL.

He started working at the university as a counselor in the Department of Minority Affairs in 1973. After earning his doctorate, he worked with

UNL's Counseling Center and later worked for the Department of Counseling and Psychological Services.

Ramirez has been honored many times. In 1987, he received both the NEBRASKAland Days' Hispanic Man of the Year in North Platte and the League of United Latin American Citizens' National Hispanic Man of the Year during ceremonies in Corpus Christi, Texas.

He also was presented Omaha's Mexican Independence Day Veterans Award in 1992 and Lincoln's YWCA Mentor and Allies Award in 2000.

After graduating from Chadron State, Ramirez served in the Army. He spent nearly a year in Vietnam when he was wounded in February 1969 while helping guard a bridge near Saigon. He rose to the rank of sergeant and was awarded a Purple Heart.

Ramirez said one of the highlights of his youth was playing second base on Scottsbluff's state championship Midgets' baseball team in 1960. His wife is the former Connie Holm of Gering.

Upcoming Events

- **Meeting: August 17**
NLAC Quarterly Meeting, Columbus
- **Literacy Walk: Aug. 17**
Family Literacy Program, Hastings
- **Free Legal Clinic: Aug. 24**
Justice for our Neighbors, Omaha
- **Free Legal Clinic: Aug. 27**
Justice for our Neighbors, Columbus
- **Deadline: August 31**
Nebraska Arts Council Artist Applications
- **Holiday: September 2**
Labor Day
- **Deadline: September 18**
Hispanic Heritage Month Essay Contest

Contact Information

Latino-American Commission
Sixth Floor, State Capitol
P.O. Box 94965
Lincoln, NE 68509-4965
Phone: 402-471-2971
Fax: 402-471-4381
Email: latino.info@nebraska.gov
Website: www.latinoac.nebraska.gov
Twitter: @NLACommission
www.facebook.com/NLACommission
www.pinterest.com/nlacommission



Creighton Students Visit La Frontera

Jose Cantu (left in white) gives students a tour and walk-through of the Border Wall and its' impact on the area.



The sixth Migrant Service Learning Immersion coordinated by Creighton University's Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Migrant Catholic Farmworker Network (MCFN) took place from March 8-16, 2013, when eight Creighton students and chaperones traveled to South Texas, aka the Rio Grande Valley, to learn about migrant life along the U.S. - Mexico border.

Ricardo Ariza, Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and Andrea Martin, CMFN Administrative Assistant, led the group. The majority of the week was spent with ARISE (A Resource In Serving Equality), a community organization that serves families living in "colonias" on the U.S. side of the border. The students spent each weekday morning with local children. The group attended mass twice and toured the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle.

The group also had an informal but profound tour of the border area, Rio Grande River and Border Wall with retired Border Patrol agent Jose Cantu. His parents Lupe and Geronimo Cantu hosted the group for a homemade Tex-Mex dinner at their home next to the Wall. Later in the week, the group toured a U.S. Border Patrol station. The tours and dinner was organized by NLAC PIO Jasel Cantu.

To view photos and read more about the trip, visit the Multicultural Office website at: <http://www.creighton.edu/studentlife/officeofmulticulturalaffairs/>

NLAC Commissioner Accepted to UNL Doctorate Program



Chandra Diaz-DeBose

NLAC congratulates Commissioner Chandra Diaz-DeBose for being accepted to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) Doctorate Program in Education.

Diaz-DeBose represents the Lincoln area and currently serves as Secretary on the Board of Directors.

Her acceptance letter states:

"Congratulations. Based upon your academic progress to date and the successful completion of comprehensive examination your supervisory committee has recommended that you advance to doctoral candidacy. I am pleased to approve their recommendation. You are now officially a doctoral candidate at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln."

The Commission wishes Commissioner Diaz-DeBose the best of luck and perseverance in her pursuit of a higher education.