

## **The White House**

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release  
May 26, 2011

### **President Obama Announces Members of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics**

WASHINGTON – Today, President Barack Obama announced his appointment of the following individuals to the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics:

- Alicia Abella, Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics
- Sylvia Acevedo, Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics
- Alfredo J. Artilles, Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics
- Daniel J. Cardinali, Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics
- Francisco G. Cigarroa, Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics
- Cesar Conde, Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics
- Luis Ricardo Fraga, Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics
- JoAnn Gama, Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics
- Patricia Gándara, Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics

- Maria Neira, Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics
- Lisette Nieves, Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics
- Darline P. Robles, Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics
- Ricardo Romo, Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics
- Manny Sanchez, Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics
- Marta Tienda, Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics

**President Obama said**, "The extraordinary dedication these men and women bring to their new roles will greatly serve the American people. I am grateful they have agreed to serve in this Administration and I look forward to working with them in the months and years to come."

**President Obama announced his appointment of the following individuals to key Administration posts:**

**Alicia Abella, Appointee for Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics** Dr. Alicia Abella is currently Executive Director of the Innovative Services Research Department at AT&T Labs Research and she also chairs the AT&T Labs Fellowship program. Previously, Dr. Abella served as Group Manager and Principal Member at AT&T Labs Research. She also serves as Executive Vice President for the Young Science Achievers Program, where she encourages high school-aged women and minority students to pursue careers in science and engineering. Dr. Abella has been recognized as one of the Top Five Women of the

Year by Hispanic Business Magazine and was the recipient of the Pioneer Award from the Women of Color STEM Conference and the Latinos in Information Sciences and Technology Association Leadership of the Year Award. She holds a B.S. degree from New York University, and an M.S., M.Phil, and Ph.D. from Columbia University.

**Sylvia Acevedo, Appointee for Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics**

Sylvia Acevedo is the Co-Founder and CEO of CommuniCard LLC., and the Co-Founder and President of Advancing America LLC. Previously, Ms. Acevedo was the Vice President and Co-Founder of Reba Technologies. She also worked at Dell Computer Corporation in a variety of capacities including Director of Home and Small Businesses and Director of Latin American Marketing and Business Development. Prior to working at Dell, Ms. Acevedo worked at Apple and IBM. She sits on the boards of the Hispanic Scholarship Consortium and the Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders. Ms. Acevedo is the recipient of the Gold Education Award from the Texas Association and the Business Woman of the Year from the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Region III. She holds a B.S in Engineering from New Mexico State University and an M.S. in Engineering from Stanford University.

**Alfredo J. Artiles, Appointee for Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics**

Dr. Alfredo J. Artiles is currently a Professor of Education, Culture, & Society in the School of Social Transformation at Arizona State University (ASU). Dr. Artiles is also affiliated faculty at ASU's School of Transborder Studies. Prior to his appointment at ASU, he was a faculty member at Vanderbilt University and at the University of California in Los Angeles. Dr. Artiles has published and presented

his work at professional conferences in the United States, Latin America, Africa, and Europe. He currently serves as Vice President of the American Educational Research Association's Division on the Social Contexts of Education and on editorial boards of nine national and international journals. Dr. Artiles was the recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award given by the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education Foundation. He holds a M.Ed. and a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia.

**Daniel J. Cardinali, Appointee for Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics**

Daniel J. Cardinali is President of Communities in Schools, an organization focused on dropout prevention. Prior to his role as President, Mr. Cardinali served as Executive Vice President of Field Operations at Communities in Schools. From 1996 to 1999, he served as both Acting Director of the Partners Reach Out/Advocacy Program and as Assistant Director of Leadership and Training at Partners of America. Mr. Cardinali currently serves as a Trustee for America's Promise, Vice Chair of National Human Services Assembly, and member of the board of Director of Child Trends and the Harwood Institute's Public Innovators Summit. He holds a B.S. from Georgetown University and a M.A. from Fordham University.

**Francisco G. Cigarroa, Appointee for Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for**

**Hispanics** Francisco G. Cigarroa, M.D. is currently Chancellor of The University of Texas (UT) System. Dr. Cigarroa is also a Professor of Pediatric and Transplant Surgery at the UT Health Science Center in San Antonio and a member of the medical staff at numerous hospitals. From 2000 to 2009, he was the President of UT's Health Science Center. Previously, Dr. Cigarroa served as the Trauma Director at Christus Santa Rosa Children's Hospital. Earlier in his

career, he was chief resident at Harvard's teaching hospital, Massachusetts General in Boston, and completed a fellowship at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. Dr. Cigarroa is a former member of the President's Committee on the National Medal of Science and a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. He is the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award given by the Eagle Pass Business Journal and the Heart of Gold Award given by the American Heart Association. Dr. Cigarroa was named among the Top 25 Latinos in Education by the National Magazine of the American Latino. He holds a B.S. from Yale and an M.D. from The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas.

**Cesar Conde, Appointee for Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics**

Cesar Conde is the president of Univision Networks at Univision Communications, Inc. Mr. Conde has held several positions within the company, including executive vice president, chief strategy officer, special assistant to the CEO, president of Univision Interactive, and vice president and Operating Manager for the Galavision Network, Univision's leading cable network. From September 2002 to October 2003, he served as a White House Fellow for Secretary of State Colin L. Powell. Mr. Conde has been the recipient of numerous awards for his efforts on behalf of the Hispanic community, including: induction into the Hispanic Scholarship Fund Hall of Fame; the Eugene M. Lang Achievement Award from the "I Have a Dream" Foundation; the Harvard Foundation Award; the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation Award; and the Cuban-American National Council's Young Leader Award. He is the chairman and co-founder of the Futuro Program, a nonprofit organization that provides role models and education workshops to Hispanic high school students. Mr.

Conde is a full Member at the Council on Foreign Relations and a Henry Crown Fellow at the Aspen Institute. He holds a B.A. from Harvard University and an M.B.A. from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

**Luis Ricardo Fraga, Appointee for Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics**

Luis Ricardo Fraga is currently Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement at the University of Washington in Seattle where he also serves as Russell F. Stark University Professor, Director of the Diversity Research Institute, and Professor of Political Science. Prior to his work at the University of Washington, Mr. Fraga was an Assistant Professor at Stanford University, the University of Notre Dame, and the University of Oklahoma. He has edited and published numerous journal articles and authored books on Latino politics, immigration, education, and voting rights policy. Mr. Fraga serves on the boards of the Public Education Network, OneAmerica, and New Futures. He received his A.B. from Harvard University, and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Rice University.

**JoAnn Gama, Appointee for Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics**

JoAnn Gama is Chief of Schools at IDEA Public Schools, which she co-founded in 1998 as an academy, and after receiving a state charter, opened IDEA as an independent charter school in August, 2000. Since IDEA Public Schools' launch, Mrs. Gama has served as Principal and Chief Operating Officer. In 1997, she joined Teach For America in Donna, Texas, where she taught 4th and 5th grade English as a Second Language. Mrs. Gama earned her B.A. from Boston University and her M.ED. in Educational Leadership from the University of Texas-Pan American.

**Patricia Gándara, Appointee for Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics**

Patricia Gándara is a professor of education in the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. Ms. Gándara is also co-director of the Civil Rights Project based at UCLA. From 2000 to 2009, she was the associate director of the University of California's Linguistic Minority Research Institute. Prior to this, Ms. Gándara served as commissioner for postsecondary education for the state of California. She has been a bilingual school psychologist, a social scientist with the RAND Corporation, and director of education research in the California Legislature (State Assembly). Ms. Gándara earned her bachelor's degree in sociology in 1969 from UCLA and a master's degree in counseling and school psychology in 1972 from California State University, Los Angeles. In 1979, she earned her Ph.D. in educational psychology from UCLA.

**Maria Neira, Appointee for Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics**

Maria Neira is currently the Vice President of New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), where she oversees the union's initiatives on educational policy. Ms. Neira previously served as Assistant to the President on education issues for the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). From 1994 to 1998, she was Director of UFT's Special Education Support Program. Earlier in her career, Ms. Neira was a teacher and education consultant. She is the founder and publisher of Educator's Voice, a professional journal dedicated to research on closing the achievement gap. Ms. Neira is a member of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement. She is a recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor from the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations and the Northeast New York Woman of Achievement Award from the YMCA. Ms. Neira holds a B.A. and an M.S. from Hunter College.

**Lisette Nieves, Appointee for Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics**

Lisette Nieves is currently a Social Entrepreneur-in-Residence at the Blue Ridge Foundation. Ms. Nieves was recently appointed as the Belle Zeller Distinguished Visiting Professor in Public Policy at the City University of New York at Brooklyn College. Previously, she served as the founding Executive Director for Year Up NY, a workforce and education program for young adults. From 2002 to 2004, Ms. Nieves served as Chief of Staff at the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) for the City of New York. Earlier in her career, she was the Director of Special Projects at the After School Corporation in New York. Ms. Nieves currently serves as the Vice-Chair of New York City's Panel for Education Policy, a trustee of the New York State Teachers' Retirement System, member of the Year Up National Board and member of the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton Advisory Council. She was a Rhodes Scholar and a Truman Scholar. Ms. Nieves was the recipient of a Robin Hood Hero Award (John F. Kennedy Jr. Hero Award) from the Robin Hood Foundation, and El Diario's Mujeres Destacadas Award from La Opinion. She holds a B.A. from Brooklyn College and a M.P.A. from the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University.

**Darline P. Robles, Appointee for Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics**

Dr. Darline P. Robles is currently a Professor of Clinical Education at the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California. From 2002 to 2010, Dr. Robles served as the first Latina Superintendent of the Los Angeles County Office of Education. Previously, she served as Superintendent of the Salt Lake City School District and the Montebello Unified School District. Dr. Robles was named among the Top 100 Influential Hispanic Americans by Hispanic Business Magazine and Woman of the Year by the L.A. County Commission

for Women. She is a Board Member for Families in Schools, the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents, and the Josephson Institute. Dr. Robles holds a B.A. from California State University at Los Angeles, an M.A. from Claremont Graduate School and a Ph.D from the University of Southern California.

**Ricardo Romo, Appointee for Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics** Dr. Ricardo Romo is currently the President of The University of Texas at San Antonio. Previously, Dr. Romo served as Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education at the University of Texas at Austin. He is a member of the American Association for Higher Education, the Institute of Latin American Studies, and the National Association of Chicano Studies. Dr. Romo has written numerous books, monographs and articles on the history of Mexican-Americans and Chicano studies. He is the recipient of the Isabel la Catolica Award, given by King Juan Carlos of Spain, the Life Achievement Award given by Latinos in the Millennium, and the Outstanding Citizen Award given by San Antonio Youth Literacy. Dr. Romo holds a B.S. from the University of Texas at Austin, an M.A. from Loyola University, and a Ph.D. from the University of California at Los Angeles.

**Manny Sanchez, Appointee for Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics** Manny Sanchez is the Founder and Managing Partner of Sanchez Daniels & Hoffman LLP, a civil litigation law firm in Chicago, Illinois. From 1981 to 1987, Mr. Sanchez was a Capital Partner at Hinshaw, Culbertson, Moelmann, Hoban & Fuller. He sits on the boards of Northern Illinois University, the Boys and Girls Club of Chicago, the Children's Memorial Hospital, and Hispanocare, among others. Mr. Sanchez was a founding member of the Mexican American Lawyers

Association and the Latin American Bar Association. He holds a B.A. from Northern Illinois University and a J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

**Marta Tienda, Appointee for Member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics** Dr. Marta Tienda is the Maurice P. Daring '22 Professor of Demographic Studies and Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs at Princeton University. Dr. Tienda is also the founding Director of the Program in Latino Studies at Princeton University. She has held tenured appointments at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and at the University of Chicago. Earlier in her career, Dr. Tienda was the President of the Population Association of America, served as Director of Princeton University's Office of Population Research, and chaired the National Academy of Sciences Panel on Hispanics. She has published over 175 scholarly papers and monographs and edited multiple volumes. Dr. Tienda is currently a trustee of the Sloan Foundation and the Jacobs Foundation of Switzerland. She holds a B.A. from Michigan State University, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Texas, Austin.