



San Antonio SHRM Educational Luncheon

October 17th, 2023



Panelist - Dr. Sheri King

After many years of service in three careers, on May 31, 2023, Sheri King, Ph.D. retired from her most recent position in higher education, where Dr. King served as the inaugural Associate Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, TX. Her path to this role was atypical. After a brief career teaching elementary school in New York City and Los Angeles, California, followed by a lengthy career in a variety of positions at a Fortune 500 company in Atlanta, GA, she decided to follow her passion to work with young adults. In 2007 she transitioned to a career in higher education.

Dr. King worked on two campuses in Georgia before she relocated to San Antonio and served as the Director of Student Life at St. Mary's University. In that role, she was responsible for undergraduate orientation programs and student involvement initiatives, including leadership development, student organizations, fraternity and sorority life, and student programming. In addition, she was the department chair for 28 freshman seminar courses and served on many campus-wide committees. Dr. King was committed to infusing diversity, equity, and inclusion into all her responsibilities.



Panelist - Alex Rodriguez

A seasoned DEI practitioner and consultant, first-generation graduate Alex Rodriguez brings her years of civil rights activism, engagement, and community outreach and development into the forefront of her work. In collaboration with organizations and businesses alike, Alex ensures company leadership, in facilitation with both stakeholders and employees, work to establish a culture built on diverse, equitable, and inclusive practices.

A Texas native and legislative analyst working in local politics, Alex is no stranger to navigating challenging dialogue and working with organizations and individuals with diverse perspectives and lived experiences. She has provided DEI training and implemented committee initiatives to varying organizations and political campaigns, most recently including works with campaign volunteers supporting former Texas gubernatorial candidate Beto O'Rourke as well as Congressman Greg Casar.

Alex proudly shares her perspective and lived experiences as an openly Queer, first-generation Mexican American facing many paths of adversity. With her lived experiences in tow, she now works alongside varying groups to ensure they understand the impact of every step made through this journey. Alex Rodriguez is a Texas State University alumnus, holding degrees in Political Science, Administrative Law, and Business Management. Rodriguez is a published author, public speaker, and workshop leader. Rodriguez currently serves as the Manager of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at San Antonio Zoo where she leads an award-winning DEI program and works alongside Executive and community leaders to make the zoo a zoo for all.



Panelist - Dr. Eric Castillo

Dr. Eric Castillo (he/him/él) is a second-generation Xicano from Yanaguana/San Antonio, Tejas, a social justice practitioner and scholar helping to produce a just, compassionate, and liberated world. He serves as Associate Vice Chancellor of Art, Culture, and Community Impact for the Alamo Community Colleges District and our local communities.

Committed to the lifelong practice of solidarity and peacemaking, he co-leads and co-creates opportunities where people can collectively flourish and work towards positive and sustainable social change. His community organizing background focuses on immigration, education equity, and racial justice. Through his office and the Peace Center, he co-facilitates racial healing circles, truth, racial healing, and transformation programs, along with various community-based projects such as the First Peoples Project and the Westside Black History Project.

Dr. Castillo received his Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of New Mexico. He was an Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship recipient and Israel-Palestine Studies Faculty Fellowship recipient. He currently holds a Racial Healing Practitioner Fellowship with the National Compadres Network, funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. His most recent publication, "Justice in Action: Decolonial and Anti-Racist Work Inside/Outside the Master's House," appears in the book *Deconstructing Constructs of Whiteness in Higher Education: Narratives of Resistance from the Academy*, published in 2022. His forthcoming article, "Myth and Monument in Old Town Albuquerque: *SouthwestPietà* and the War of Presiding Histories' ' will be published (2024) in *Regeneración: A Xicanacimiento Studies Journal*.



Moderator - Veronica G. Pacheco

Since September 27, 2021 Veronica has served as the Sr. Specialist – Diversity, Equality & Inclusion (DEI) at Southwest Research Institute (SwRI). With over 20 years of Human Resources experience, including the last seven focused on DEI projects and initiatives, Veronica ensures that SwRI policies and procedures continue to reflect their high standards of diversity, equity, and inclusion. She is responsible for advising HR, the Executive team and SwRI Advisory Groups on DEI topics, trends and initiatives. She continues to enhance the cultural and social climate of ongoing solutions that promote greater DEI awareness. She coordinates SwRI's DEI efforts in the creation of employee resource groups, coordination of outreach initiatives and development of celebrations of employee diversity while leveraging data, training, and other fact-based information.

Veronica holds a B.A. in Psychology from Texas A&M University, College Station and an M.A. in Industrial/Organization Psychology from St. Mary's University, San Antonio. She is a member of Society for Human Resource Management and a member of San Antonio Human Resource Management Association. Born and raised here in San Antonio, Veronica is passionate about her work in the evolving DEI space and looks for opportunities to grow and share her experiences with others.

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