UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center

UCLA College | Life Sciences Integrative Biology & Physiology

Building A Hispanic-Thriving Community Through Research Opportunities

The Chicano Studies Research Center (CSRC) is excited to partner with the Division of Physical Sciences for a faculty search at the Associate or Full Professor level. This search aims to recruit the CSRC's inaugural Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) STEM Faculty Director. Q&A will follow the presentation.

Rudy M. Ortiz, PhD, FAPS, FAHA, UC Merced

Tuesday, May 28, 2024 | 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

Haines Hall 144 (CSRC Library)

Zoom link | Meeting ID: 955 6355 7837 | Passcode: 070315 | Post-Talk Survey Link

Abstract: As of 2022-2023, there are 600 HSIs in 28 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, with another approximately 400 emerging HSIs, with 82% of HSIs concentrated among 7 states and Puerto Rico. California houses approximately 29% of the nation's HSIs. It is anticipated that by the start of the 2024 academic year, there will be 665 HSIs in the US and its territories to serve approximately 4M Hispanic students. Despite the steady growth of HSIs in the US, federal appropriations for funding HSIs and HSI programs between 2009-2023 did not keep pace with HSI growth. Although 5 current UCs and 21 CSUs are HSIs, this only represents about 15% of the total institutions in CA. While the increasing number of HSIs in the US and Puerto Rico is encouraging, despite the disproportional financial allocations, it also represents challenges for recruiting and supporting students at HSIs. Complicating these challenges includes the competition among UCs for system-specific funding and among CA institutions for state funding along with the fact that UCLA currently is not an HSI. Therefore, efforts to build the HSI STEM center will require a robust SWOT analysis in collaboration with stakeholders to develop a strategic plan to: (1) help UCLA achieve HSI status quickly, (2) identify unique strengths that will distinguish UCLA from the other 600+ HSIs to make them more competitive for HSI-specific funding opportunities, (3) identify strategic opportunities to allow UCLA to participate collaboratively with the other UCs to leverage the collective strengths, and (4) establish a center founded on promoting and integrating the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusivity. My vision is focused on building an "HSI" center that strategically identifies opportunities to allow students to thrive and not just having the institution to serve them. While my vision to build a thriving community of students, staff, faculty and community partners, I expect the ultimate vision and strategic plan will be developed by a team and vetted by stakeholders. Nonetheless, at first glance, I envision that building this HSI STEM center could be founded on research opportunities for students based on the fact that UCLA was only second to UCSF in total NIH funding in 2023, and this is only one source of funding. The diverse research interests of the faculty that I envision will constitute the center should situate it well to be highly competitive for a multitude of funding agencies and enhance inter- and multidisciplinary research where appropriate.

Speaker Bio: Rudy was born and raised in El Paso, TX and graduated from Texas A&M University (1990 & 1994). After a brief stint at NASA Ames Research Center in Mt. View, CA, he earned his PhD (2001) from UC Santa Cruz, studying the endocrinology of prolonged fasting in northern elephant seal pups with a focus on renal physiology and substrate metabolism. He has studied the contributions of aldosterone in the progression of Ang II-dependent hypertension. He was a UCOP PPFP fellow and hired as a founding faculty member of UC Merced. He is a Full Professor of Endocrinology and Physiology with research experience among a diversity of animal taxa. Rudy's current research extends into the study of altered nutrition and metabolic dysfunction on cardiovascular and renal diseases and lipid metabolism in humans and rodent models as well as pharmacological manipulations (CBD and exogenous T4) of endocrine systems to dissect the contributions of AT1, insulin receptor, and redox signaling pathways. He is a current Program Director of NIH URISE (T34) and USDA HSI Education training grants.