



# La Palabra

National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees

Volume 7 | October 2018





## NHCFAE Annual Training Conference Save the Date: August 6-8, 2019



The Federal Long Term  
Care Insurance Program™

[www.LTCFEDS.com](http://www.LTCFEDS.com)



### National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees "Con Orgullo en Nuestra Hispanidad"

NHCFAE  
PO Box 23276  
Washington, DC 20026-3276  
[www.nhcfae.org](http://www.nhcfae.org)

#### Mission

The National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees is a professional, diverse organization that focuses on advocating career placement and advancement through support, education and alliances.

#### History

Established in 1978 in an effort to provide a network for Hispanic employees of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Aviation Industry. It became a national organization in 1983. Today, the Coalition is the chief advocate

for issues affecting Hispanics in the FAA. The Coalition derives its support from membership dues, corporate sponsorship and private donations.

#### Officers

President, Faviola Garcia  
Vice-President, William Fernandez  
President's Special Assistant,  
Celsa Rodriguez  
Director of Administration,  
Oscar Torres  
Director of Education,  
Randall Resto  
Director of Public Affairs,  
Susie Diaz  
Director of Resources,  
Dolores Leyva

#### Standing Committees

Constitution and Bylaws, Misty Peña  
Corporate Relations, Raquel Ysasi-  
Huerta and Davey Irizarry  
Membership, Yami Gonzalez  
Conference, Edward Cardenas and Ida  
Marrero  
Legislative, Oralia "Lolly" Martinez  
501(c)(3) Special Assistant, Erik Salazar

#### Corporate Sponsors

BlueCross BlueShield Federal  
Employee Program  
Federal Long Term Care  
Livingston Financial  
NATCA  
PASS  
SkyOne

#### Editors

Susie Diaz, Misty Peña, Erik Salazar

#### Design

Spark Creative

The views expressed herein are solely those of the authors and should not be construed to be the opinion of the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees. Suggestions and opinions expressed in La Palabra are not necessarily endorsed by NHCFAE. Nothing in those pages is intended to supercede operator's or manufacturer's policies, practices or requirements, or to supercede government regulations.

© 2018 National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees. All Rights Reserved.

# CONTENTS



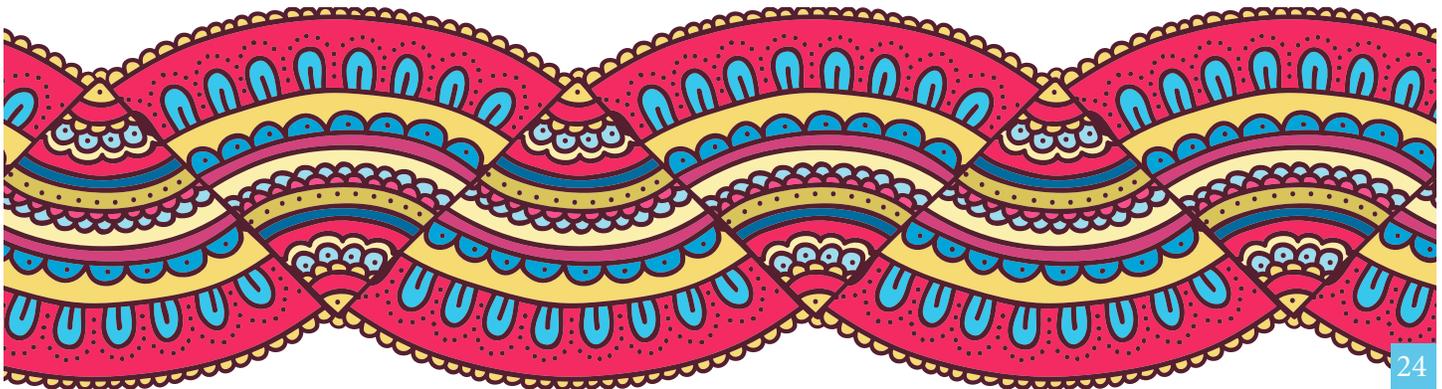
8



16



29



24

## La Palabra, Volume 7

5 / Message from the President

6 / Editor's Message

### From Our Members

7 / Who's Your VP?

*By: Bill Fernandez, National Vice President*

8 / 2018 Conference Wrap Up

10 / 2018 National Award Recipients

11 / ACE Camps

12 / First Quarter Executive Board Meeting

*By: Randall Resto, National Director of Education*

14 / Director of Education Farewell

*By: Ida Marrero, Previous National Director of Education*

15 / Danny Gutierrez Scholarship Recipient

16 / Rene Matos Scholarship Recipients

20 / FEEA Scholarship Recipients

21 / Member Tuition Reimbursement Recipients

24 / Hispanic Heritage Month Articles

29 / Outreach

*By: Bill Fernandez, National Vice President*

30 / I Am Proud to be American Mexican

*By: Vanessa Alicia, Northwest Mountain Member*

31 / NHCFAE Supports Other Employee Associations

*By: Veronica Salazar, MMAC Regional Chapter Director*

32 / Outreach Events

34 / Meet Some New Members

35 / Good Bye and Thanks

*By: Mindy Moreno, Membership Chair*

36 / Membership Updates

*By: Mindy Moreno, Membership Chair*

# Coming soon... November 2018



## Welcome to the ATO Career Planning Tool

A new release of the Air Traffic Organization (ATO) Career Planning Tool (CPT2) provides employees with online self-help resources and tools for career planning and development.

Users can explore detailed position information for a wide variety of jobs across the ATO, and build and save desired career paths.

Each position included in CPT2 is profiled to include a description of duties, knowledge, skills, job fit characteristics, developmental resources, and examples of desired leadership behaviors.

We are entering approximately 100 positions and careers paths into the tool, which include non-technical support positions that have career path linkages across the ATO.

CPT2 will now be accessible by mobile devices and adds new features such as:

- Inclusion of all ATO organizations and more key positions;
- Updated and more detailed job information and developmental resources; and
- The option to invite up to five colleagues to provide feedback to the user.

For more information, visit: [myatocareer.faa.gov](http://myatocareer.faa.gov)

### The Career Planning Tool helps users to:



Explore career options within the ATO



Use job-specific development suggestions to prepare for targeted positions



Use job-specific assessment and development tools to identify strengths and areas for improvement to prepare for targeted positions.



Solicit feedback and ratings from selected colleagues on knowledge and skills you possess for certain positions



Build customized career plans



**FAA**  
Air Traffic Organization

CAREERPLANNING



## Message from the President

We have been honored and delighted to join in Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations this year, and while they concluded on Oct 15, 2018, the festivities reminded us we can, and should, be proud of the contributions of Hispanic Americans *every day!*

It was a joy to participate in such a wonderful tribute to our rich heritage and shared culture. Hispanic Heritage Month rightly acknowledges what we all know deep in our hearts - that diversity has been a source of strength for our country for hundreds of years and will remain so for all the years to come.

Our Coalition has matured – we’re just turning forty – after starting in 1978. When we began, we faced enormous obstacles to increasing diversity in our workforce. We have worked tirelessly to overcome these barriers using patience and determination in our bid to change a lifetime of entrenched hiring practices in the FAA.

Our hard work has culminated in the FAA embracing diversity and inclusion in a way we’d have only dreamed was possible, when we started forty years ago. On October 5, 2018, President Trump signed the FAA reauthorization bill, funding and authorizing FAA pro-

grams and services through FY2023. In the bill, there is an emphasis on hiring more minorities, specifically Hispanics, women, and people with disabilities. It is a milestone worth celebrating. Now the question we face is: what comes next?

First, we must continue to press for open hiring and keep up our efforts in providing a network for Hispanic employees of the Federal Aviation Administration and the Aviation Industry. Second, we must facilitate and encourage young Hispanics to consider working in the aviation industry by developing strategies to help them enroll in study courses that open doors to careers in aviation. It’s critical that we encourage young Hispanic men and women to consider aviation as a career – too many generations before us were denied the opportunity or never knew the opportunity even existed.

To reach the next generation of young Hispanics, we need to enhance aviation training, mentorship, education, and outreach programs. In looking to the future, it’s up to us to ensure they have the tools and opportunities necessary to achieve their potential, while encouraging them to always be proud of their heritage.

For the next 60-90 days, I will work in the role of Acting Deputy Regional Administrator of the Western Pacific Region. My appointment is recognition for what this Coalition symbolizes: unity in our mission, strength in our identity and readiness to pick up the mantle of leadership.

We still have much more work to do and we will get it done. We are a family and *together* we will strive to grow the diversity and inclusion that has already helped make the United States a truly great, welcoming country.

I look forward to working with you, and thank you for committing to our mission.

Con gusto y servicio,

Faviola Garcia

# Editor's Message

**Hola familia!**

Summer is gone, but it sure does not feel like it here in Southern California. We're still wearing our tank tops, shorts and flip-flops. The weather does not really change here, however, I still love traveling and seeing the different seasons and the fall leaves around the country. With that said, "Welcome to Fall" and welcome to Volume 7 of La Palabra Magazine.

In Volume 7 of La Palabra, you will read several articles about Hispanic Heritage Month that different regions celebrated. We have some great articles from members, ACE Camp updates and some exciting outreach events. A huge shout out goes to our former National Director of Education, Ida Marrero, for her awesome effort receiving articles from all the students that received scholarships and tuition assistance. GREAT JOB, IDA!

I hope everyone enjoyed our 40<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary and Conference in Fort Worth, Texas! Who loved the conference coin? Wasn't it BIG? Just like Texas! Congrats Southwest chapter for showing us how Texas does it. In this volume, you will also read articles about this year's conference from different members and photos of our National Award recipients. Personally, I am a Cali girl, but I believe that I have a little bit of Texas within me, so I truly enjoyed working with the Southwest chapter members and conference committee. Are you ready for next year's conference? If you have not heard yet, it is in San Juan, Puerto Rico! Save the dates: Aug. 6-8, 2019. Look for more information in our website and in your emails.

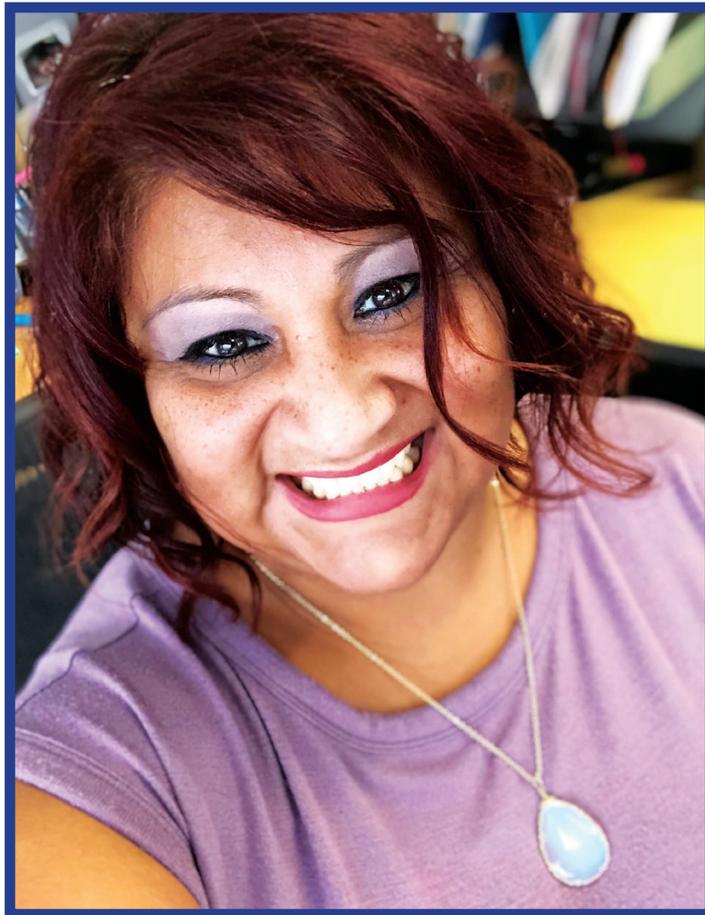
I would like to welcome three new members to the Executive Board; Dolores Leyva - Director of Resources, Bill Fernandez - National Vice President and Randall Resto - Director of Education. I wish them all the best of luck. With that said, I also want to give a big thanks to my "Dream Team" for their support, guidance, hard work and all the great things that we accomplish together. Special thanks to Erik Salazar, Misty Peña, Mindy Moreno, Edward Cardenas and Oscar Torres! You guys have been my rock.

I hope you enjoy reading La Palabra, Volume 7 and I'd like to give a special welcome to our new magazine design company, Spark Creative. I hope you enjoy this fresh new look.

Don't forget to send me articles and pictures of your activities and stories from your regions at [dopa@nhcfae.org](mailto:dopa@nhcfae.org)

Abrazos,

Susie Diaz  
National Director of Public Affairs



**Linked** 

[www.linkedin.com/pub/national-hispanic-coalition](http://www.linkedin.com/pub/national-hispanic-coalition)



Stay connected to NHCFAE for real time updates.  
Search for [www.facebook.com/nhcfae](http://www.facebook.com/nhcfae)

# Who's Your VP?

¡Hola! I am Bill Fernandez, and I am your new NHCFAE National Vice President...but who am I?

I am originally from Pasadena, CA, and I still consider it home even though I haven't lived there in over 40 years. My dad (my hero!) was half Cuban (Grandpa), half Puerto Rican (Nena) born in Spanish Harlem in New York. My mom, is a third generation Californian whose grandparents moved to California when there were still Native Americans living under the Eagle Rock (for those of you who don't live in the LA area, the Eagle Rock is a rock formation that lent its name to the city just north of Los Angeles).

I am the eldest of four sons. My father worked two jobs to keep us off food stamps. We didn't have many things, but we had a lot of love in our home. I was not a great student and I got into trouble from time to time. At 16, I lost one of my best friends in what would later be called a "Car Jacking".

I joined the Air Force at 17. I somehow ended up spending 20 years in the Air Force, as I never thought of making it a career. The Air Force was difficult for me because I always missed my family, but it rewarded me with wonderful experiences including a career in Air Traffic Control, a language (they sent me to learn Spanish and assigned me in Spain), they funded my bachelor's and master's degrees, and ultimately helped me find my wife almost 6,000 miles from home.

Sylvia, my wife, is from Rio Piedras in Puerto Rico. We were married on my maternal grandmother's birthday, by my maternal grandfather in a church in Hato Rey while Hurricane Gilbert passed the island rattling the storm shutters on the church. I remember the tears of pride in my father's eyes, on his first visit to the island of his mother who had passed the previous year. One of the reasons I wanted to learn Spanish was to be able to speak to Grandpa and Nena in Spanish. I was able to talk to Grandpa, but Nena passed before I got the chance.

Sylvia and I had two beautiful baby boys. Vince is our oldest and he graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a degree in Linguistics. He took classes in Puerto Rico in Spanish, in Paris in French, and in St. Petersburg in Russian. After his graduation, Vince went back to St. Petersburg...for a girl...now his wife. He is a teacher in Austin, Texas.

Alex is my younger son by 19 months. Alex graduated from Central Oklahoma University with a degree in business. This summer, he earned his Masters from the University of Toledo where he worked as the Assistant Golf Coach for the University Golf team. He is a golf instructor for Jim McLean Golf Academy at the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, Florida.

I am still not sure what I want to be when I grow up! The only thing I knew I wanted in my life was to be a father (like mine!) and I am very proud of my boys (they will always be my boys!).

Both of my sons overcame learning disabilities. Vince was diagnosed with ADHD in the second grade. At the time, we lived in the "Ritalin Triangle", an area outside Atlanta with the highest use of Ritalin in the country. We did not want our son on drugs, so we tried other options including hard work. Alex is dyslexic and has had to learn how to adapt. Their mother instilled in them the importance of studying and hard work. It was not easy, but both boys have learned to excel in academic environments.



I like to think of myself as a teacher. In the military, you are normally assigned a job (ATC for me). The reality for a career military person is that you only really do that job for your first 4 or 5 years. After that, your REAL job is to teach 18 & 19-year olds how to do that job. I got pretty good at it. When I retired from the military, one of my best friends kept trying to convince me to become a teacher, and after he died of cancer, I did.

For 6 years, I was a Spanish teacher and football coach in Alpharetta, Georgia. I loved the job! I loved the interaction with the kids. I enjoyed the day to day mundane, the excitement of game day, and the pride of being with those kids through it all to include the occasional tragedy we endured. Unfortunately, what they say about teacher salaries is true, so we packed up and moved to Oklahoma so I could join the FAA.

I became a Terminal Instrument Procedure (TERPs) Specialist in Oklahoma City. And after 3 years of building approach and departure procedures, I became an instructor, primarily teaching how to build Performance Based Navigation (PBN) procedures. I was an instructor for 7 years before transferring to D.C. to work in the PBN Office to help establish policy and planning the PBN National Airspace System.

I am a passionate person. My biggest flaw is sometimes I let my emotions get in the way of my better judgment. I love my family and extended family. I am a bit of a wuss (I cry in sad movies). I love sports, and dancing (Zumba) and good food, especially Mexican and Puerto Rican/Cuban/Dominican.

I promise to you that I will use my passion to help make our NHCFAE better, and in doing so making the FAA better and ultimately our country better. I like to think that since I was 17, I have been serving my country, first in the Air Force, then as a teacher, and now in the FAA and NHCFAE.



## The NHCFAE Celebrates 40 Years

By: Carlos Rios, Southern Member

July 10th – 12th, 2018 the NHCFAE celebrated an impressive 40 years of being part of the Federal Aviation Administration and held its yearly conference in the beautiful city of Fort Worth, Texas.

I joined the NHCFAE early last year and for quite some time, I had been thinking about joining an organization that shared the values and devotion for the development of the Hispanic workforce. I was also looking for a group that would challenge me and allow me to network with senior colleagues and learn from their experiences. As my journey in the FAA progressed, I learned about the Hispanic Coalition through a colleague by the name of Randall Resto. Next thing I knew, I was submitting my application to become a member. A couple of days later, I received a package with tons of information and was impressed with how much the organization cared about member involvement. I immediately started familiarizing myself with how to get involved and searching opportunities to give back to the Hispanic community.

Fast forward to July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and there I was in Fort Worth, Texas getting ready to participate in the annual national conference; excited and eager to learn everything there was to learn. This was my very first time attending an event such as this and from the very first day, all of the members were extremely welcoming. Everyone had a smile on their face and introduced themselves warmly as we began to exchange knowledge and information.

I was impressed by the ambition and dedication of the members and how the event ran seamlessly from start to finish. The speakers were extremely passionate about the topics they were discussing and even took the time to get to know the participants. I was also impressed with the quality of information I acquired that week and felt like I benefited from the sessions tremendously. One workshop that stood out to me was one led by Darrin Catania regarding the interview process and how to create KSA's for the FAA. It involved a lot of good information that motivated me to take my career to the next level.

Nevertheless, aside from all of the wonderful speakers and countless resources with which I was provided, I was astonished at the quality of membership; not only was every single person I met friendly and easy to talk to, they also shared my vision and were very relatable.

If you've never attended this conference, as a first-time member, I would highly recommend it. It's amazing and you will not regret spending a couple of days getting to know the amazing group that makes up the NHCFAE. I hope to see everyone next year in Puerto Rico!

## LOS VEO PRONTO EN PUERTO RICO!



## My First Conference Experience

By: Bianca Frias, Western Pacific Member

This year was my first year attending the NHCFAE Training Conference held in Fort Worth, TX. As a new hire, not even 2 years yet with the FAA, I was excited and intimidated about attending. Once I went through it all though, I was glad I did. I would say my favorite sessions were: Honing your Leadership with guest speaker Marcos Orozco, Female NHCFAE Fireside Chat and the Creating KSA's/Interview Workshop. What I enjoyed most about the presentation from Marcos Orozco was his backstory of how he came to where he is now – running an independent pub-

lishing company that helps publish Latino authors. It was a story that was relatable and hit home on some parts. He said life is all about adjusting and often times, it all starts with leadership. He presented good leadership traits and simple ways on how to improve as a leader. The Female Fireside Chat was one of my favorites because it showed Hispanic females who can do engineering, be a leader, and most definitely, can overcome the most difficult of obstacles or decisions. It was inspiring because you don't see a lot of Hispanic females in STEM fields or

management positions and here we had three. Creating KSA's/Interview Workshop with Darrin Catania was super helpful and gave a lot of great information. What helped more was the Mock Interview Panel with Vaughn Turner, Ignacio Flores and Nick Reyes. They "interviewed" two members, one for a frontline manager position and the other for a senior management position, and then provided their own feedback and experiences. The conference overall was fun and very informative and I would definitely attend again.

## NHCFAE Advantages

By: Celeste Flemming, MMAC Member

I recently felt I was reaping the rewards of my membership in NHCFAE. I found myself on a telcon with a recently detailed K level person in our sponsoring organization. I had talked to the person at the 2018 NHCFAE conference in Fort Worth, and had a built a level of relationship and trust with the detailee – he seemed to value my input even though I am at a lower level. I think it was because of our connection at the conference. Also on the telcon was a recently promoted ETR (last time we had talked, she was a field supervisor of ATSS). Because of my participation in NHCFAE, I knew the ETR on a high stakes call and I felt I had a good relationship with her – trust is valuable! Then I told all this to Randall Resto, someone I also had conversations with at the recent Fort Worth conference, and also someone who has a position of decision-making over my work in a sponsoring organization. I think it's much easier for Randall and I to get through our biweekly status and decision conversations because we built a better relationship at the conference in Fort Worth. I'm excited to go to Puerto Rico next year for the NHC-

FAE conference, and Randall has firsthand experience with the location, so he advised me about it. This is cultural enrichment as well as a personal relationship, which I appreciate. All these advantages are coming from my NHCFAE membership and participation. And I'm not even Hispanic! The benefits of the coalition are accruing to me through the relationships I have gained by my membership and participation. One of the other things I appreciate is being given opportunities to give back to the local community, whether it is school supplies for Sophia

Garcia or clothing for local high schoolers in need. I feel I can trust NHCFAE to get my donations to people who need them and can use them. I'm starting to feel sorry for all the people who are not getting these great relationships and opportunities because they think they have to be Hispanic to join and benefit from the Coalition. I appreciate hobnobbing with all the smart, hardworking NHCFAE members who are getting promoted and detailed!! Congratulations!!



# 2018 National Award Recipients

**Member of the Year:** Vanessa Gurrola  
**Manager of the Year:** Michael Freilich  
**Executive of the Year:** Mark C. McClardy  
**Service Award:** Barbara Lindsay  
**Thank You Award:** Bill Fernandez



**Dolores Torres-Parker**  
**Non-Member of the Year**



**Ida Marrero**  
**Service Award**



**Mindy Moreno**  
**Presidential Award**



**Erik Salazar**  
**Officer of the Year**



**Southern Region**  
**Chapter of the Year**



**Misty Peña, Lydia Gomez-Martinez,**  
**Justin Perez and Edward Cardenas**  
**Thank You Awards**



## The Girls in Aviation Day

By: Sylvia Harvath, Alaska Regional Chapter Director

The Girls in Aviation Day was held on October 13, 2018, at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) Aviation Complex. The event was sponsored by Women in Aviation, Professional Women Controllers, UAA and NHCFAE. It was a day for middle and high school students to explore exciting opportunities within the aviation industry. They experienced being an Air Traffic Controller in the school's 360° Tower simulator and Radar, a pilot flying in two different simulators, a maintenance technician actually testing components and inspecting the inside of engines. The day ended with a panel of professional women: Pilots, FAA Inspector, Meteorologist, Cabin Safety, and Aircraft Insurance, who discussed their jobs and a question and answer segment. There were 50 students present and there were many on the waiting list to attend this event. This was the second time for this type of event and we saw many eyes light up and enthusiastic students talking about the day. I would call that a success.

## ACE CAMPS - Western Pacific

By: Jonathan Eagle, Western Pacific Regional Chapter Director

In the month of July 2018, the Western Pacific Chapter was very busy supporting the ACE camps at both Van Nuys Airport and Compton Airport. At Van Nuys Airport, on two separate weeks, NHCFAE member Peter Juanpere helped guide students on a tour of the tower. The students were very thankful for the tours and even awarded the facility a trophy. Elizabeth Medina-Torres was coordinating with the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals (OBAP) and the National Black Coalition to help assist with their ACE camp. Susie Diaz also stepped in and made sure the kids had their lunches. Thanks Susie! Jonathan Eagle was a guest speaker and told his unique story to those aspiring for careers in aviation.





## First Quarter Executive Board Meetings and San Juan Chapter Hispanic Heritage Month Event

By: Randall I. Resto, National Director of Education



I would like to share the incredible experience I had during the Executive Board first quarter meeting and the Puerto Rico, San Juan chapter members' recruitment event.

Most of the board arrived on Saturday October 6, 2018, and it was incredible to see the positive energy in each E-Board member. Our first day started early Sunday morning, around 8:30 a.m., with a very busy agenda capturing different topics that needed strategic planning about our organization's current/future vision and goals. Honestly, the day went super fast! In a blink of an eye, it was already 1:30 p.m., time to re-fuel our energy with some delicious Puerto Rican food! The afternoon wasn't any different because time was our enemy. Every time someone would look at the clock, it was like two hours just passed in a thirty-minute time frame. The first day of our meetings ended around 8:30 p.m. The only problem was that the energy and the passion were still there at the end of the night. After the first day meeting ended, the group decided to explore some local restaurants in Old San Juan. Being a native, born in Puerto Rico, and having lived on the island for more than twenty-five years, of course I felt the gratitude and pleasure to share some good recommendations to explore. Through the short drive, I was sharing some historic information and sites of San Juan with our group. It was a wonderful way to close our first day in Puerto Rico!

The second day wasn't any different, with an early start and still with a full agenda with many topics that seemed to never end. The group was able to make many tactical decisions that I believe will positively impact our organization.

One of the decisions we made was to establish a Training Conference timeline that will ensure that at each conference, we will be able to announce the next Training Conference to include the dates and hotel location. This should better benefit members and minimize the impact on their Lines of Business.

We believe that it is our responsibility to inform our members as early as possible in order to have a great and successful event. The board also discussed the Solicitation of Interest for the different chairs of the committees. I'm super

excited and delighted to inform all of you that the E-Board was able to select great members to each of the special committee chairs and a couple of co-chairs. There are still plenty of opportunities for any member to gain valuable experience serving on one of our many committees if you are interested, just let any member of the E-Board know or email us at [eboard@nhcfae.org](mailto:eboard@nhcfae.org).

After two full days of meetings, guess what, we started with more meetings! This time the meeting was with our lobbyists from Washington, D.C. via telecon. We discussed several important things happening on the Hill, like the recent FAA Reauthorization bill and some of the benefits and opportunities for our organization within the new FAA reauthorization.

After completing our meeting agenda, we all headed to the San Juan International Airport to meet the Air Traffic Control Tower Manager, Mr. Carlos Rodriguez. The first thing that captured everyone's attention was the stunning view from the tower. As soon as you enter the office, which is located in the 14<sup>th</sup> floor, the magnificent view overlooking the airport and the Isla Verde beach is so impressive that it can make anyone sit there for hours. Mr. Carlos Rodriguez' professionalism was remarkable, and the warm welcome to our E-Board was wonderful. We were able to discuss the future plans of our Training Conference in Puerto Rico and bond the coalition vision, goals and purpose with the needs of his group.

Our next stop was at the San Juan CERAP where we met a larger group of managers from Air Traffic, Flight Inspections and Technical Operations. It was nice to connect with Mr. Miguel Medina, the Acting Air Traffic manager, who gave us great feedback from his past experience when he was part of the Hispanic Coalition in the San Juan Chapter. We also met with Mr. Andres Encarnacion, the Tech Ops TOM manager, and he understood the needed support for the coalition. The overall experience in the San Juan CERAP was wonderful. I was even able to connect with some old FAA friends in the hallways and letting them know that we are here and promoting the Training Conference.



The best part of the day was at the Hispanic Heritage Month event at Levis Restaurant in Isla Verde, Puerto Rico. We had a great event with a nice number of members and potential new members. I was able to connect with some members that left the coalition and they were very honest with why they left. But one thing was clear, they were very proud to see us in Puerto Rico and they felt the positive energy behind our group. They were able to connect again with the coalition and our purpose, and I can assure you, we will be creating new bridges with the San Juan Chapter.

Our last day, Wednesday, was incredible for our President, Ms. Faviola Garcia, the Southern Regional Chapter Director, Mr. Edward Cardenas, and myself. We had the pleasure of visiting two Universities, Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico (La Inter) in Isla Grande airport and Universidad de Puerto Rico en Bayamon (UPRB).

At “La Inter”, we met with Ms. Victoria Thorpe and Ms. Caroline Ocasio. Our president was able to connect with them and express the desire to establish a relationship with the university and their program, which is in many areas of aviation. They gave us a tour of the facility and we also had a small session where we sat down with some of the program students to discuss the importance of aviation and how crucial it is to have Hispanics involved in aviation.

Our second stop was at UPRB (Vaqueros), which by the way is my Alma Mater! Walking through the hallways brought back great memories and seeing my professors was an unbelievable and breathtaking feeling. We sat down with the President of the University and a large group of Directors from different departments (Electronic, Computer Science, and Business Administration). The discussions were amazing and the future looks very good in regards to having many events with them. Also, we took a small tour through the university and sat down with the professors and students, which was a very large group of students. We delivered the message and we answered some questions from them as well. We gave away some FAA souvenirs and the students asked us different questions about the FAA’s different jobs and opportunities. Overall, I felt the connection with the stu-

dents and we felt we accomplished a lot. Special thanks to Professor Samuel Lugo, Professor Juan Sanchez and Professor Rene Rodriguez for helping me make this event happen.

I left the same day, flying back to Washington D.C. But I left with a great feeling of accomplishment and future commitment. For now, we feel we re-energized the San Juan Chapter, but it is going to take a great team to continue the rebuilding of the lost relationship. I’m super optimistic we will do great things in Puerto Rico and I promise each and every one of our members that the 2019 Training Conference will be one to remember.



## It's Been My Pleasure

By: Ida Marrero, Former National Director of Education

Familia,

As I close out this chapter as your National Director of Education (DOE), I would like to start by thanking you for your support and the opportunity you gave me to represent you as your DOE. It has been a great ride, ensuring that every year I was able to deliver a conference which gave all of you the opportunity to not only grow but also to network with the various executives. The Western Pacific Chapter put on a truly California-style conference and the Southwest Chapter Conference in Texas, well as they say, "Everything is bigger in Texas". Without the help of the chapters, we would not be successful. Again, thank you for making 2017 and 2018 amazing conferences.



One of my favorite parts of this position is reviewing scholarship applications. I mostly enjoyed reading the stories of our scholarship winners and how they struggle and worked hard to continue their educational goals. I can tell you that we have so many talented members who are determined to continue with their education. Membership tuition is a great benefit for our members. If you haven't looked into it and are looking to continue your education, this can be a great way to assist in the cost of education.



This year has been extra special as I was able to obtain an article from every single scholarship recipient. It was amazing to read their stories and with their pictures I was able to put a face to the story. I also want to announce that we have raised the amount of scholarship money we will be giving in 2019. Our \$1,000 Rene Matos scholarships will increase from thirteen to fifteen individual scholarships and the member tuition reimbursement has also been raised to \$15,000 total. The Danny Gutierrez scholarship will continue at \$1,500.

So, I pass the baton to your newly elected Director of Education, Randall Resto. He is a highly motivated individual who is excited in working not only on our next conference in Puerto Rico but also to ensure that our scholarship programs continue to be as successful. Randall's current position is a Training Requirements Specialist for Air Traffic Services Policy and Requirements Group (AJI-2320) in FAA Headquarters, Washington D.C. Before this position, he was an instructor for Technical Operations at the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center (MMAC). Randall comes into this position with a great amount of experience and I have total confidence he will provide an exceptional conference.

Again thank you again for your support and we'll see what new direction the organization takes me.

## NHCFAE Scholarship and Member Tuition Reimbursement Program

By: Ida Marrero, Former National Director of Education

The NHCFAE Scholarship and Member Tuition Reimbursement programs are one of the most important things we provide as an organization. We provide the means to make the dream of an education a reality. Not only am I excited about being part of this program, but I am honored of being part of an organization who advocates higher education.

The **Rene Matos Memorial Scholarship** was developed to help minority students' complete higher education and to recognize and reward academically superior performance, achievements, leadership and community involvement. Rene Matos was the NHCFAE President from 1989-1992. He was a highly motivated and dedicated man, who in every way epitomized the dream to succeed while helping others along the way. We honored his dream by establishing a scholarship in his name. This year we had a total of 178 highly qualified and motivated applicants. Thirteen extraordinary students were selected to receive a \$1,000 scholarship. Next year we will be giving fifteen \$1,000 scholarships, so spread the word.

The **Danny Gutierrez Engineering Scholarship** program is for engineering majors. Danny, an engineer himself, believed that the best way to help is to provide support and resources. He knew that we could make a difference one person, one family, at a time. On March 26, 2008, Danny succumbed to a long battle with cancer. Danny was a member of NHCFAE

for 12 years and during 6 of those he held the various positions within the organization. Eventually, he became the National Director of Resources for 2 and a half years, until the time of his passing. The Danny Gutierrez Memorial Scholarship was developed to assist minority and female engineering majors who need financial assistance for college. This year we had nine highly qualified and motivated applicants. One extraordinary student was selected to receive \$1,500.

The **Member Tuition Reimbursement Program** is one of NHCFAE's greatest perks. The NHCFAE allocates funds each year for members who have successfully completed a course or training program of higher education. The dollar amount will be based on the number of NHCFAE members applying and the cost of the courses. Enrollment and completion of the course must have occurred within the previous calendar year. This year we provided reimbursement to eleven members.

This year I am so excited because we received many articles from not only our scholarship recipient's, but also from our members who received tuition reimbursement. These articles will be published in this addition of La Palabra and I know it will definitely motivate others to apply for our scholarships and member tuition reimbursement. The application filing period opens on February 15, 2019 and closes on May 1, 2019. I highly encourage you to continue pursuing your educational dreams and reach for the stars.

## **Danny Gutierrez Engineering Scholarship Recipient**

Alexa Thompson, Great Lakes Region



I have faced some tough obstacles over the course of my education. My father died in 2005; and my mother died in 2009 during my last semester of high school, both taken suddenly by heart disease. I struggled to maintain my once excellent grades while also providing my three siblings with emotional and occasional financial support. Fearing that I'd stagnate in the confines of my broken home, I decided to pursue higher education at Albion College. It was so hard to focus on my studies after I transferred to this 4-year institution with little preparation or guidance; I was academically terminated after my third semester. I took the spring 2011 semester off to evaluate where I was and where I wanted to be in life. During that time, I sought out therapy for what was later known to be a hard-hitting combo of an anxiety disorder and dysthymia. I committed myself to taking better care of my mental health, and also started to get regular "heart healthy" checkups. In the fall of 2011, I started taking classes at WCCCD, where I was introduced to the federal TRiO program; it's been relatively smooth sailing since then.

In the past few years, I've been honored to accept several opportunities and awards:

- MTU SURF 2016, competitive research fellowship
- MSGC Fellowship Award 2016-2017, a NASA strategic goals research fellowship
- MTU MiCUP/MI-LSAMP 2015 intern, another summer biotechnology research internship
- MTU MiCUP/MI-LSAMP 2014 intern, a summer biotechnology research internship
- MTU NSBE 2015-2016 Leadership Award, "Most Valuable Member"
- WCCCD Dean's List fall 2014 and spring 2015, an academic excellence recognition

There are several programs that I can thank for helping me achieve my status of academic excellence. Three programs that have significantly impacted me are: Wayne County Community College District's (WCCCD) TRiO-Student Support Services; WCCCD's study abroad program; and Michigan Tech University's Michigan Colleges and Universities Partnership (MiCUP) program. TRiO-SSS is a federally-funded program that helps foster the success of traditionally underrepresented students. As a first-generation college student, the TRiO program has provided a wealth of wisdom and resources that I can't look to family to produce. The WCCCD study abroad program immersed me in the rich cultures of Belize and Guatemala for a week. I came to see myself as more of a global citizen – a key piece of a modern, well-rounded education. On the heels of returning stateside, I applied to the MiCUP summer internship program. MiCUP aims to encourage interest in STEM careers, research, and university transfer opportunities. After being selected, I was granted the privilege of conducting biomedical research at Michigan Tech University. I enjoyed the "crazy smart" climate so much that I applied for the internship again, completed another summer of research, and transferred to Tech the following semester. I can only hope to help other similarly disadvantaged students in the way that I have been in my educational journey.

# Recipients of Rene Matos Scholarships



## **Adrianna M. Rivera-Velazquez** Southern Region

As a Junior Mass Communication student at Brenau University, I am very proud of my achievements. Besides my academic achievements, I also have been able to participate in a variety of clubs and organizations

that have enriched my views and given me the opportunity to broaden my perspective and knowledge in different aspects of life.

I have had the honor of being the recipient of the 2018 Rene Matos Scholarship, the Martin Journalism and Mass Communication Scholarship, and the Sally Ann Scott Scholarship.

Since my sophomore year, I have been a member of the Phi Alpha Theta Honor Society, and also a member of the Student Government Association, serving as the Diversity and Inclusion Chairman. I currently have the privilege of serving on the Brenau Honor Court as a Junior Justice. I am also a member of Alpha Gamma Delta, where I have proudly served as the Vice President of Finance for two years. We have dedicated our efforts in our philanthropy and awareness by partnering with Meals on Wheels and Feeding America, two projects dear to my heart.

Last semester, I had the honor and privilege to travel to China as a Chinese Ambassador in representation of Brenau University. This opportunity allowed myself and fellow representatives to venture to China for a week to get to know our future classmates that joined us the following fall semester. I have four wonderful mentees who teach me about Chinese culture, as much as I teach them about American culture.

It is my goal and desire to keep representing my culture with honor and pride not only during my collegiate years, but also as a professional Latina woman. I have been inspired by many strong Latina women in the past and I want to follow in their footsteps to become an inspiration for others.

## **Alma Macias** Southwest Region

I recently turned 19 last month. I have lived in Dallas since I was born, along with my five siblings. I come from a low-income family. When I was 9 years old, my Dad passed away and even though I missed some time in school, I managed to rise back up. I attended North Dallas High School and I was doing great. In my junior when I was 17 tragedy struck again. My mother passed away and once again, I did not go to school for about a week.



Even though I was not ready to go back, I still did. All my parents ever wanted was for their children to make it far in life. When my senior year came, I tried my best to apply to many colleges in hopes of being accepted or even a full ride. Sadly, the full ride did not happen, but I was lucky to get many scholarships. Every day since my senior year started, I was either applying to scholarships or colleges and because I didn't give up and I tried my best, I was accepted to all the colleges I applied to. Then when it was time to make my decision, I chose The University of North Texas. They awarded me a scholarship, and it was the closest to home. When I graduated from North Dallas High School, I was number six out of about 200 students. I was very proud of myself and I hope my parents were too. Sadly, nothing can stay good forever. Last month, tragedy struck once more. At the age of 18, I lost my brother in a car accident. It was barely the second week of college, and again I missed school for about a week, then I had to come back, and so here I am trying my best to keep going forward with my head held high trying to make it far in life for my Mom, my Dad, my brother and the family that I still have alive.



## **Cezanne A. Bianco** Western Pacific Region

I am a graduate student at UC Berkeley's School of Public Health. I am studying Epidemiology and Biostatistics. I am passionate about serving vulnerable populations through communicable disease control and

prevention. I graduated Summa Cum Laude from UC Irvine, where I studied Public Health Policy. I am published in Preventive Medicine Reports from research conducted at UC Irvine as an undergraduate student.

Before my time at UC Irvine, I was a community college student at Saddleback College in Mission Viejo, CA, where I graduated Magna Cum Laude. I am proud that I have made it to graduate school despite the data that demonstrates how community college students are less likely to pursue higher education and make it to graduate school. I hope to continue to serve the community around me and worldwide next summer as an intern in a Global Health setting abroad. Thank you for your generous financial support that will help me continue to pursue my dreams of becoming an infectious disease epidemiologist!

**Imelda Gutierrez**  
**Southwest Region**

Due to the hard work and dedication that I showed throughout my four years of high school, I was able to accomplish my educational goals and receive numerous awards. Throughout high school, I received the Scholar-Athlete Award for three years, including two Special Recognition Awards. At the end of my senior year, I graduated number fifteen, which placed me in the top 10% of my class. I was able to maintain a 3.8 GPA and obtain 19 college credit hours. The Rene Matos Scholarship has been an honor award I have received this year. My other educational accomplishments include receiving a Regents' Scholarship for first generation students at the institution I am now attending, Texas A&M University. My past educational achievements helped me get where I am today, and I will continue to work hard to accomplish my current educational and career goals, which include obtaining 4.0 GPA and becoming a pediatrician.



**Kaitlin Calleros**  
**Western Pacific Region**

I am so thankful to the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees, for choosing me for the Rene Matos Scholarship. I will always be grateful for the help and opportunity these funds will assist me to obtain my educational goals. I will not forget and will pay it forward in the future, when I am able. Thank you again for all your help. I attended Alta Loma High School, and I was accepted to University Of California, Merced. I will be majoring in Biology. I am the Vice President of the National Honor Society, Ambassador for National Society of High School Scholars, Secretary of The Kiwanis Key Club, Varsity Cheer and Dance Team. Also, I will be representing UC Merced on Their Elite Cheer and Dance Team.



**Jasmine Perez**  
**Southwest Region**

I currently study at San Antonio College pursuing a degree in Psychology. I attended St. Mary's University for two years where I was an active member of Phi Beta Sigma (National Freshman Honor Society), Drama Club, and Alpha Psi Omega. While at St. Mary's, I volunteered for Communities in Schools, which serves at risk youths at local San Antonio high schools. I was on the St. Mary's Dean's List for four semesters. I transferred to San Antonio College to explore different career opportunities in the fall of 2017, to pursue a major in Psychology, and have since been a member of the national college honor society, Phi Theta Kappa. I have been on the President's Honor List every semester since my transfer. I currently hold a 4.0 GPA and am Work-Studying at a local San Antonio high school to gain experience in the education field. I look forward to transferring to UTSA in the Fall of 2019 to complete my bachelor's degree in Psychology and master's degree in School Counseling. I one day hope to work as a School Guidance Counselor.



**Miguelina Felix**  
**New England Region**

It is with great honor that I am accepting this scholarship. After earning my undergraduate degree in Fine Arts, I have continued to not only create, but research and write as a means to grow my creative side. With this, my passion for leading, writing, and research has grown as well as my desire to further my studies. This scholarship has allowed me to continue my studies at the Public Relations Program at Quinnipiac University. With this program, I aim to refine my knowledge and develop my skill set in Public Relations with hands-on experience to launch my career. My academic and career goals include exploring research methods, writing, and most importantly, learning all principles and strategies that go hand in hand with Public Relations Management. I want to be able to create an effective positive change within an organization and take on a leadership role to communicate effectively a message. I am particularly interested in pursuing a profession within the military and government agencies in which I seek to prepare formal statements and write speeches for an organization. I am very grateful for this scholarship, as it has allowed me to follow my career path.

**Phoebe Casey**  
**Southwest Region**

I graduated from Arlington Heights High School in 2016. In 2017, I earned an associate of arts degree from Tarrant County College. I am currently working towards a degree in Critical Languages and International Studies in Russian at the University of Texas at Arlington.



Even though my father set his pathway for success, he had to work extremely hard to provide for his family. At nineteen years old he was married and had my brother, where he soon became a single father. My brother had later also dropped out of high school. Both he and my father worked extremely hard helping me with my academics as a young girl, and I soon was able to excel through my primary school years. Reaching high school, I started out in advanced placement and honors classes where I decided that I wanted to challenge myself more; I decided to join the IB program at my school. I am more than happy to say that I successfully received my IB diploma and am in my second semester of college. Had it not been for family and the amazing support I have received from peers and sponsors, I would not be where I am right now. I feel it is time to move on to the next stage in my life and I could not be any prouder and more grateful.



**Jessica Pegueros**  
**Southern Region**

I have received numerous awards while attending South Fort Myers High School, including the AP Capstone Diploma, AP Scholar, A Honor Roll, AB Honor Roll, and being in my school's Hall of Fame.

I have participated in different clubs and have volunteered, both of which have helped my school and community. They include: Technology Students Association (inaugural Secretary), National Honor Society, Future Business Leaders of America (inaugural Secretary), STEM@Work, and having over 100 hours of being a summer camp counselor at a local Boys and Girls Club organization. My experience in being an American Legion Auxiliary Florida Girls' State member and participating in Florida Gulf Coast University's STEM Camp has helped me develop leadership and STEM skills. I graduated third in my class, and am now attending the University of Florida pursuing a Mathematics degree. Continuing my help in the community and in my leadership qualities, I volunteer at Gainesville High School for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and am participating in the Leader Scholars Program at UF.

**Robyne Solis-Winkler**  
**Southwest Region**

I recently transferred to the University of Texas at Dallas in Richardson, as a junior. I have a double major in Psychology and Child Learning & Development and am anticipating to graduate in spring 2020 with my Bachelor's degree. I intend to continue attending the University of Texas at Dallas to earn my Master's degree in Human Development and Early Childhood Disorders. Prior to attending the University of Texas at Dallas, I attended College of the Mainland in Texas City, Texas and earned my Associate degree in General Studies with honors. During this time, I became a member of the Phi Theta Kappa National Honor Society and the National Collegiate Scholars Honor Society.



**Selena Cascante**  
**Southern Region**

As a first-generation Hispanic and college student, I am extremely proud to say that I am able to attend college. My father is so amazing and has helped me reach my goals. He has given me strength and has always been there for me. He came to the United States from Costa Rica when he was twelve years old, along with our family who was able to enter the country by tailoring uniforms for American soldiers. When he was seventeen years old, he dropped out of high school to join the Marine Corps.



**Grace Sedaghatpisheh**  
**Southern Region**

I was born in Miami, Florida; however, my parents were not. I come from a family of driven, hardworking immigrants- both aspiring for a better life for themselves and for the family they hoped to have. As they risked so much, leaving their family and friends behind, working constantly to make ends meet, and persevering through any obstacle this new unknown land brought their way, attending a university is a monumental moment for me as it is not only about attending a higher institution, but it is a stepping stone for both myself and my family, alike. This grand moment represents the success of the hard work that



my parents put in while living in this country and brings a sense of accomplishment throughout my loved ones. I have this chance to further my education and make a positive impact on the world and I will work hard and take full advantage of it, as I know that many people in the world do not have access to this once in a lifetime educational opportunity.

I am currently attending New York University's Stern School of Business, concentrating in Finance and Marketing with a joint minor in Computer Science and Mathematics. I am extremely humbled and appreciative of being able to advance my academics at this prestigious university that allows me to give back to my family and the loving communities I am a part of.

Being a recipient of the Rene Matos Scholarship has only pushed me to work harder and motivated me to continue to succeed and inspire those around me. This scholarship has been a stimulant, filling me with the urge to leave my positive mark wherever I go, and I could not be more grateful, as it has already aided me tremendously in my studies.

### **Aubrey Deeker Hernandez Western Pacific Region**

In Marthasville, Missouri (population 500 in the 1980's), I grew up with no ready access to theatre or to anyone who could prepare me for a career as an actor. My Protestant-minister father and first-generation Cuban mother were equally at a loss when their son caught the acting bug after a kindergarten holiday show. All I knew was that I was following a need within myself, and when I was accepted into The School of Drama at The University of North Carolina School of the Arts, I was plunged head first into the deep end of a world that changed my life. Looking back, I find myself ever grateful for the conservatory education and classical training I received at UNCSA under former Dean Gerald Freedman. Eclectic by nature, and with special attention paid to the development of the physical instrument, the training was not a conceptual take on the craft of acting, but rather a clear, practical, accessible technique with which to approach the work. The skills I learned gave me a way of working, and therefore the confidence to approach any genre of theatre, film, and television.

One week after earning my bachelor's degree in the summer of 2001, I was hired to do two Thornton Wilder one-act plays at Lincoln Center Theatre in New York. This was a job that earned me membership in the union for professional actors, Actor's Equity Association, and then, shortly thereafter, I stood on the rooftop of my apartment building in the East Village of Manhattan and watched as both World Trade Center Towers crumbled to the ground on 9/11. This was my introduction to New York. As the city and nation



recovered over the course of the next year, I spent my time auditioning and waiting tables, and when I booked a role in a production of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* at historic Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC, I decided to stick around the nation's capital for a while. A rich, diverse theatre town boasting scores of professional theatres, DC offered me a vast range of styles and companies with which to work. From wildly innovative world-premiere productions by Tony-Award winning playwrights like Ken Ludwig and David Ives, to contemporary classics at The Kennedy Center and Studio Theatre, to classics at The Shakespeare Theatre and Folger Theatre, I was given the opportunity to run the gamut as a young actor.

After booking a multi-episode arc on HBO's *The Wire*, my career led me to Los Angeles to pursue more television and film. I've booked roles on series like Ridley Scott's *The Man in the High Castle*, *True Blood*, *NCIS*, *NCIS: New Orleans*, *Castle*, *Backstrom*, as well as many others. I was the final (ever) serial killer on the two-part series finale of CBS's *The Mentalist* opposite Simon Baker, where I was a little part of television history by being one of the first actors ever filmed by a major motion picture studio (Warner Bros/CBS) via drone the morning immediately following Federal Aviation Administration approval of aerial drone photography for the motion picture industry.

Over the past several years, in addition to performing, I have fallen in love with my teaching duties at AMDA College and Conservatory of the Performing Arts in Los Angeles, a BFA program priding itself on diversity with campuses in New York and LA. I have taught a wide array of American and International students in classes like *Intro to Shakespeare*, *Advanced Shakespeare*, *Classics: Page to Stage*, *Styles, Acting*, *Audition Techniques for TV & Stage*, and *Acting for the Camera*. I have found teaching so fulfilling that, this fall, I enrolled as a graduate student at The University of San Diego to finally and officially pursue a Master of Fine Arts. A Master's Degree will help me to hone my skills as an educator and give me a much greater range of knowledge to pull from for the classroom. I feel driven to teach because I love what I do- theatre, acting, and the effect the arts can have on individuals and communities. I have found that my real-world experience alongside so many inspiring artists, in addition to my life-changing training in undergraduate and now graduate school, has allowed me to be highly effective in the classroom. I feel I have something to share: a practical set of skills that will make students better at doing what they love and what they feel called to do just as I did so many years ago.

I am immensely grateful to The National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees and The René Matos Scholarship Program for their commitment to higher education, and for their generous efforts in helping Hispanic students embark on their paths toward success. Support comes in many forms and in many ways, and for yours, we say thank you!

# Recipients of FEEA Scholarships



**Pedro Gutierrez Jr.**

First, thank you to everyone involved in selecting the candidates for the NHCFAE FEEA Scholarship. I am honored to receive this and very grateful for the support of the FEEA family to help those who are seeking a higher education.

My father immigrated to the United States in the 1970s with a 6th grade education because that is as high as the schools went where he grew up. In the late 1980's and early 1990s, while employed by the Dallas Water Utilities, he took advantage of a GED program offered by the city of Dallas. As a child, I saw my father studying in the evenings and earn his GED even though he was working 10-hour days and the only source of income for our family. Though he did not have a higher education, he pushed my brother and me to do better for ourselves, finish high school, and do more.

Upon graduating high school in 1996, I joined the United States Marine Corps to serve my country and to be able to pay for college after. After five years of service in the Marines, I began my college education. At 26, I earned my Bachelors of Science in Electronics Engineering. In the fall of 2005, I began working for the FAA as a radar technician at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport. For the next two years, I was in several different radar schools at the FAA training center in Oklahoma City. In 2012, I began the Federal Government's Executive Leadership Program, which led to my first front line manager's position in Technical Operations as the Fort Worth Manager.

When my wife and I found out we were pregnant with our first of two children, we both made the decision to pursue our Masters degrees. The decision was twofold; as a full time employee, I knew it would be a slow process and would only be able to take one class a semester due to family and work obligations. Being a supervisor in the FAA, I decided to pursue my Masters of Science in Management and Leadership. I did this to give me more knowledge in the field I was working in and for credibility among peers. The second reason I decided to pursue my Masters was to set the bar higher for my children. Next year in December of 2019, I am planning to walk the stage at Tarleton State University and receive my Masters and it will be awesome that my two little boys will witness it.



**Sophie Buevas**

Hello, my name is Sophie Buevas, incoming freshman at Miami Dade College. First and foremost, I would like to thank the NHCFAE FEEA fund for the great scholarship opportunity that I have been awarded. I graduated from Our

Lady of Lourdes Academy, an all-girls Catholic private high school, with a very expensive tuition. I am very grateful that my father paid for my education all 4 years, but now with my sister currently enrolled at the same high school, it was hard for my father to pay for both. My father works at the FAA, so with the NHCFAE as a sponsor, I am so glad this scholarship pulled through just in time to help my family out with the tuition for both semesters of my freshmen year at college. To start my long journey in majoring in Clinical Psychology, I will be attending Miami Dade College for 2 years where I will earn an Associate in Arts degree in Psychology. I have been admitted to other colleges and universities, but decided to attend Miami Dade College because with an Associate in Arts degree I will be guaranteed admission at any university in Florida. Therefore, after 2 years, I will continue in Orlando where I plan to enroll at the University of Central Florida to finish earning my Bachelor in Science degree.

Clinical Psychology has become an interest of mine since I was a freshman in high school. I will be guiding patients that are diagnosed with any kind of mental disorder, ranging from anxiety disorders to psychotic disorders. As much as I enjoy helping others, I feel it is also a good way to make known that mental illness can happen to any normal individual in the world and are very real, being that some people do not take it very seriously. I hope to help and guide as many people as I can through the use of listening and making sure the patient feels comfortable enough to live a happy and fulfilling life.

I am not sure where my journey will continue after I graduate from UCF with my Bachelor's degree, but I am excited for the achievements along the way. I could not be where I am right now if it were not for this amazing opportunity of a scholarship. Thank you for the ongoing support and God bless.

# Recipients of Member Tuition Reimbursement



## Aleksandra Damsz, Capital Member

NHCFAE has presented me with a wonderful opportunity to help in furthering my education through the Member Tuition Reimbursement Program, for which I am so grateful. Over the course of the last three years, I worked toward and

graduated with a Masters of Applied Economics from Johns Hopkins University while continuing to work and learn as an FAA employee in the office of Benchmarking and Metrics. This master's program has helped to develop and strengthen the analytical, research and time management skills that I need for my job as a financial analyst at the FAA, as well as expand potential opportunities for the future. The member tuition program is one of the many ways that NHCFAE supports our community.

## Brenden Villegas, Great Lakes Regional Chapter Director

I have been working toward my Masters in Aeronautics with a specialization in Air Traffic Management for a few years. I do on-line school through Embry Riddle Aeronautical University. The classes directly influence my skills and knowledge for my career as an Air Traffic Control Supervisor. With only two classes and my capstone project left, my plan is to finish by this time next year. I would like to extend a sincere thanks to all the members of NHCFAE for all the support and help throughout the years. The member tuition reimbursement program is a great benefit. Anyone that is in school or has an interest in getting back into school should really take the time to check it out.



## Christina Filipowski, Western Pacific Member

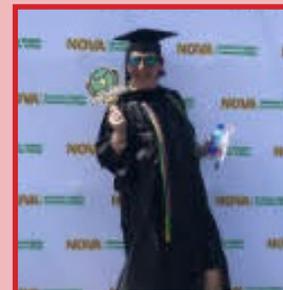
My name is Christina Filipowski and I am an air traffic controller at Deer Valley Air Traffic Control Tower in Phoenix, Arizona. My educational accomplishments include a Bachelor of Science in Air Traffic Management, a Bachelor

of Science in Aviation Management, a Master of Education in Higher and Post-Secondary Education and a Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership. It is such an honor to be the first in my family to attend college. My goals and

aspirations include sharing my knowledge and experience with future aviators and expanding my career through higher levels of management within the FAA. Thank you to the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees for all your support in my educational journey.

## Jamie M. Feger, Capital Member

Twenty Years in the Making...I finally did it. I finished my associate's degree, but not without a lot of help. It started almost 20 years ago while I was in the United States Army living in Virginia and working at the Pentagon. I had one year of education under my belt that I received before joining the military so I knew the ropes somewhat. After much debate, I returned to college this time married with no kids with a goal to finish. However, after one semester, the FAA picked me up for my dream job as a controller so we moved to Chicago. It took another year-long break to get back into school, that and I needed to establish residency for the tuition discount. Then along came our first kid and education was again put on the back burner. I started back up after four long years of training at ZAU ARTCC. Then, with two classes left, we moved again, back to Washington D.C. as part of a career enhancement move. It was here at HQ where I met NHCFAE and their tuition reimbursement program. Again, after establishing residency in Northern Virginia and navigating FAA HQ for a year, it was time to finally finish the degree that had been so elusive for so many years. With two kids now filling our home and a husband going back to school full time I just was not sure financially how it was going to happen. However, a close peer and member of the NHCFAE encouraged me to go back to school and told me about the scholarship. This scholarship was like nothing I had ever heard before and at a time when the FAA was reducing funding for degree completion programs, this option became the perfect solution and for that I am very grateful for. Education is important, as is the chance to break down barriers for those who want to get to an education. In addition, the moral of the whole story is to keep at it, finish the degree, no matter how long it might take you, as there are plenty of resources and people out there who can help, just ask your employee associations like the NHCFAE or me! Finally, my husband and I are continuing on to finish our Bachelor's degrees, he in Electronic Engineering and me in Interdisciplinary Studies with a minor in Commercial Space and Unmanned Aerial Systems. Once you have an education, no one can take it away from you, so start that degree no matter when, and then do whatever it takes to finish it!





**Laurie Ortiz, Central Region Chapter Director**

My name is Laurie Ortiz, and I am a recipient of the NHCFAE Member Tuition program, another semester has gone by and I can see the light at the end of this long tunnel. I am in the midst of my Fall

2018 semester and tackling a course that I put off for so long, Macro-Economics. The study of large-scale economic decisions. It's a course that is important to our economy, but not a favorite of mine. It is, however, a course of goals, economic goals and how to ensure long stable economic success. This alone should drive other fellow members to pursue your educational goals, see it to the end, and be a part of our economic successes.

I had been attending junior college on and off for a number of years, but it wasn't until 2011 that I decided to focus on finishing my degree in Business Administration.

I am proud to be a member of the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees, and grateful for their support of my educational goals. I encourage those members who are considering returning to school to please take that opportunity. As a member and recipient of the NHCFAE Membership Tuition program I have been able to make that step forward to achieve my goals. Thank you NHCFAE and the Member Tuition Reimbursement Program.

**Pedro P. Chamorro, Western Pacific Member**

I would like to thank the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees for making me a recipient of the 2018 Member Tuition Reimbursement Program. I highly encourage for members of NHCFAE to apply for these benefits, as education is very important in our career path whichever this might be. I have been in the FAA for 13 years and I was hired by the agency through the CTI program. I completed my AS in Communication Technology from Los Angeles Trade Tech College as one of the requirements to be accepted in the program was the completion of such degree.

I joined the military in 1996 and ever since I have been involved in the aviation industry and one of my final goals in the FAA is to become an Aviation Safety Inspector. In the military, I performed duties as structural mechanic, electronic counter measure system and finally as propulsion technician in the engine shop. I wanted to work on a Bachelor Degree on Aviation Maintenance Management to develop my knowledge in the field of aviation. I grateful to the NHCFAE in helping me finance my education. It is helping me enrich my knowledge in the aviation field and helping to be one step closer in reaching my goals. Thank You!



**Mike Narvaez, Southern Member**

It has been many years now, and the struggle is real trying to juggle work, home, family and education for many of us. We all strive to do great things in our lives, and a large part of that preparation for greatness comes with a formal education. Edu-

education serves to give a person credibility, a sense that we can accomplish anything in life. Education provides that much needed foundation and springboard to elevated self-esteem, confidence, better career opportunities, increased salary, and for many Hispanics one of the only ways out of poverty.

Education for Hispanics is not attainable for many reasons, least of which is not the financial burden it has on our culturally sensitive families trying to balance helping distressed family members from Puerto Rico, find their footing after a catastrophic hurricane, or the father who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's, and the daughters traditional wedding with the demands of a college education.

There is one light that continues to shine the way giving us opportunities to continue the hard work at accomplishing our goals. Like a lighthouse in the dark rough seas lighting the way for those who embark on this perilous journey is that great institution called the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees. The long history of providing much needed scholarships and funding for us who pilot the helms and trenches of education is honorable, admirable and down-right exemplary.

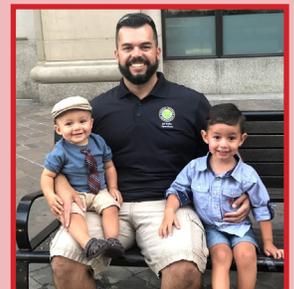
My name is Miguel "Mike" Narvaez and I am a proud member of NHCFAE and recipient of NHCFAE Tuition Reimbursement. My continued goal is to finish my degree in Information Security from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University then attend graduate studies thereafter. The NHCFAE has been a beacon of light and support for me and all its members, helping them achieve their dreams of a quality education.



**Pedro Gutierrez Jr, Southwest Member**

My father immigrated to the United States in the 1970s with a 6<sup>th</sup> grade education because that is as high as the schools went where he grew up. In the late 1980's and early 1990s, while employed by the Dallas Water Utilities, he took advantage of a GED program offered by the city of Dallas. As a child, I saw my father studying in the evenings and earn his GED even though he was working 10-hour days and the only source of income for our family. Though he did not have a higher education, he pushed my brother and me to do better for ourselves, finish high school, and do more.

Upon graduating high school in 1996, I joined the United States Marine Corps to serve my country and to be able to



pay for college after. After five years of service in the Marines, I began my college education. At 26, I earned my Bachelors of Science in Electronics Engineering. In the fall of 2005, I began working for the FAA as a radar technician at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport. For the next two years, I was in several different radar schools at the FAA training center in Oklahoma City. In 2012, I began the Federal Government's Executive Leadership Program, which led to my first front line manager's position in Technical Operations as the Fort Worth Manager.

When my wife and I found out we were pregnant with our first of two children, we both made the decision to pursue our Masters degrees. The decision was twofold; as a full time employee, I knew it would be a slow process and would only be able to take one class a semester due to family and work obligations. Being a supervisor in the FAA, I decided to pursue my Masters of Science in Management and Leadership. I did this to give me more knowledge in the field I was working in and for credibility among peers. The second reason I decided to pursue my Masters was to set the bar higher for my children. Next year in December of 2019, I am planning to walk the stage at Tarleton State University and receive my Masters and it will be awesome that my two little boys will witness it.



**Randall I. Resto, Capital Chapter and National Director of Education**

My name is Randall I. Resto and I am the new elected National Director of Education. I'm so grateful and excited for having the opportunity to serve and give back to the

members of the coalition. I am a firm believer in education and professional development, and I want to help others in achieving those same personal and professional goals. I want to help our members obtain the quality training that can help them in their current jobs and future career promotions. Fragments of my professional career success have been because of my college education, the many professional development courses and the support of the NHCFAE. I began my career in the FAA at the end of 2007, in Tampa International Airport as an Airway Transportation System Specialist (ATSS). Later in my career I became an Instructor for Technical Operations at the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center in Oklahoma. In my current position, I am a Training Requirements Specialist for Air Traffic Services Policy and Requirements Group (AJI-2320) in FAA Headquarters, Washington D.C.

Education is a massive investment a person can do, one that you earn with sacrifice that only those close to you really understand, but most important, nobody can take that from you. I earned my bachelor of science degree in Electronic Engineering Technologies from the University of Puerto Rico in Bayamon, in May 2006. I also earned my Master's Degree in Business Administration in Management at NOVA South-

eastern University, Fort Lauderdale in December 2017. For the last three years the NHCFAE has been part of my educational success through the great professional training conferences, the large amount of networking the coalition offers and the member educational reimbursement program.

Other than working for the FAA, I have been working for the Air Force National Guard and the Reserve since May 2000. One valuable lesson the Air Force thought me was to "Aim High", and is exactly how I live my life in every aspect. I don't know what the future will bring to me, but I will do my best by aiming high in order to reach better things in my life.

**Richard Berdecia, Capital Member**



I work as an Operations Supervisor in Washington ARTCC, and my journey to complete my Bachelor's degree in Applied Science and Technology with an emphasis in Air Traffic Control took a bit longer than your average student. I started taking classes while on active duty in the Marine Corps in Beaufort, SC around 1995. In 1997, I transferred from MCAS Beaufort to NAS Willow Grove in Pennsylvania, and was on "temp loan" to McGuire AFB to serve as a Tower Watch Supervisor. While at McGuire AFB, an airman on my crew suggested I look into completing my degree at Thomas Edison State College (now known as Thomas Edison State University). I enrolled in 2001 and began to take classes as much as my schedule would allow. The FAA hired me in 2002, and at that time, my priority was to reach the level of Certified Professional Controller, while juggling family life at home. Once I obtained my certification in 2005, I returned to school taking classes sparingly. As my children got older, I decided that it was time to set the example, and concentrate on earning a degree. On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017, I achieved my goal. I am humbly grateful to NHCFAE for supporting me and other members with our educational goals.



**Mark Chavez, Southern Member**

I am once again honored and grateful to receive this Member Tuition Reimbursement. The degree I am being partially reimbursed for is a Master of Project Management from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, which I completed in May of 2017.

The degree was completed; however, the student loan still remains and this award is more than appreciated. In addition to the degree, I completed a FAA Project Management Mentorship Program and remain watchful for any opportunity to gain more experience within and outside the agency. My networking within the NHCFAE has allowed me to meet other members who have pursued higher education and would like to say that I am proud of you all and encourage everyone to keep moving forward!



## MMAC Celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month

By: Erik Salazar, MMAC Member

On Tuesday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center Chapter of the NHCFAE hosted a Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration in the Headquarters Auditorium for MMAC employees.

Opening remarks were given by Veronica Salazar, MMAC NHCFAE Regional Chapter Director. Kevin O'Connor, MMAC Deputy Director, welcomed the audience and gave a brief history of the NHCFAE and Hispanic Heritage Month. John Espinosa, NHCFAE member, introduced Dr. Melchor Antuñaño, Civil Aeromedical Institute Director, who provided a very animated and inspiring keynote address while discussing how he immigrated from Mexico and detailed his keys to success. Dr. Antuñaño has been able to

check off many items on his bucket list by simply taking opportunities as they were presented to him. He talked about the importance of taking risks, and finding mentors that will help you. He also noted the importance of serving as a mentor to others. Dr. Antuñaño has a very impressive biography and says he considers his career at MMAC a hobby rather than a job because he is so passionate about what he gets to do on a daily basis.

To conclude the celebration, Pamela Selbe, MMAC NHCFAE Deputy Chapter Director, introduced the Yúmáre Mexican Folkloric Dancers, Inc., who entertained the crowd with several traditional Mexican dances. This organization is a nonprofit that was established to promote tradition-

al and regional dances of Mexico by emphasizing education of its history, traditions, art, culture and music. Every dance has a story or meaning, and every song has a feeling. The pride in their culture and family was evident through each of the dancer's outfits and movements.

Special thanks to the MMAC Chapter for planning and hosting this celebration for the Aeronautical Center.





## Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month in Northwest Mountain

By: Karla Valdez, Regional Chapter Director

The NHCFAE Northwest Mountain Region had great success celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month this year. Our celebration started with our members displaying wonderful cultural art items; the art exhibition was shown from September 17 – October 12, 2018, in the Northwest Mountain Regional Artist Corner. Some of our items represented the Aztec Calendar, Los Dia de los Muertos, Maracas and much more. We took time to create colorful tissue flowers to decorate our display and they looked amazing. We had a lot of people show interest and took the time to admire each item and read the history behind them.

Our second event was held on September 25, 2018. It was about Latin American aviation around the world, *Aviadoras y Pioneros*, presented by our guest speaker Dan Hagedorn, Curator Emeritus, from the Museum of Flight

in Seattle, WA. He presented one of my favorites, first known pilot female in Central America, Violeta Guirola de Avila. Violeta was a Salvadorian who was the first known pilot to fly solo in a conventional aircraft at Guatemala City in 1921. Violeta was also the first woman to drive a car in El Salvador. We had close to 15 employees that attended our event, which was outstanding. Popcorn and pan dulce were served to our guests during our presentation.

Finally, we ended our celebration with our famous Salsa-Making Contest on October 10, 2018. We had seven participants entering our contest. This event was a success; employees enjoyed tasting our delicious salsas and networking with other lines of business. Employees look forward to more events like this to bring the FAA familia together. Congratulations to our two winners, James Geiss, Frontline Manager, Per-

sonal Property Group and Christopher Ramirez, Manager, Quality Control Group.

Overall, we had a great time planning and celebrating each event. I personally want to thank all of the members and non-members that participated, especially Vanessa Alicia, Brandi Walters, Lora Singh, Joy McDaniel and Shirley Hingada. I know I could not have done it without these Ladies. Sinceramente!





## Western Pacific Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

By: Jonathan Eagle, Western Pacific Regional Chapter Director

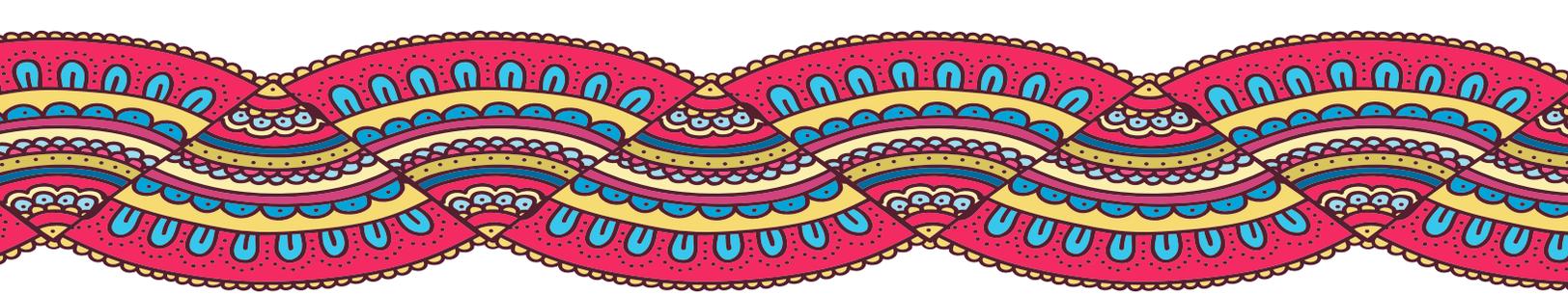
On September 19, 2018 and October 9, 2018, the Western Pacific Chapter celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month with the collaboration of the Professional Woman Controllers (PWC) and NATCA. Our celebrations were held at the “Transplants Brewery” in Palmdale, CA and “21<sup>st</sup> Amendment Brewery” in San Leandro, CA. Special thanks to Martin Ramirez and Micah Freeman for helping make the event in Palmdale a success. Western Pacific was able to sign up three new members including Micah from PWC. Special thanks to Kristin Simms, for her help on the NATCA side for the event in San Leandro, CA. We signed up two members at this event. In addition, thank you to Dina Earl at SkyOne Federal Credit Union for the giveaways provided at both events. The members in the Western Pacific region look forward to more collaborative events in the future. Thanks again to all those who came out in support.



## Hispanic Heritage in the Old Pueblo

By: Kristina Harris, Western Pacific Member

Tucson is a vibrant city with rich Mexican influence. NHCFAE Tucson Area Chapter and NATCA teamed up to host a Hispanic Heritage Month luncheon. All employees from the two local facilities were invited to the ATCT Tower to enjoy a deliciously catered lunch of Mexican tamales (green corn and red chili), beans and rice. The food was made by Miguel Zepeda’s mom, a local entrepreneur. New facility supervisor Irving Rodriguez made some tostones (fried plantains) to share his Puerto Rican culture with those in attendance. The event introduced employees to the NHCFAE and its benefits and we’re happy to report that two new members signed up to join the Hispanic Coalition familia. It was a beautiful day in the Old Pueblo and the Tucson Area Chapter continues to grow.



## Southern Region Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

By: Bernice Merly, Atlanta Area Chapter Director

On October 3, 2018, the Southern Regional Office celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month. This year the celebration was sponsored by the Office of Airports, with Rachel Evans as the chairperson for this event. A very dedicated team from different lines of business supported Rachel in the organization of this event, including yours truly in Engineering Services. The activity included the guest Speaker, Nancy Rivera, who is the Regional Survey Manager with Bureau of the Census in Atlanta, Georgia. She delivered a delightful view on how similar and different every Hispanic country is by simple examples on how each country names every day foods, such as:

### Bananas

- Platano (Mexico, Peru)
- Banana (Argentina, Chile)
- Cambur (Venezuela)
- Guineo (PR, Ecuador)
- Banano (Colombia, Guatemala)

### Popcorn

- Cabritas (Chile)
- Cotufas (Venezuela)
- Canguil (Ecuador)
- Canchita (Peru)
- Palomitas de Maiz (Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua)
- Pipoca (Bolivia)
- Pochoclo (Argentina)
- Pororo (Paraguay, Uruguay)
- Rositas de Maiz (Cuba)

Her presentation was followed by a dance lesson and demonstration by

“Paso Fino Dance Studio” sponsored by NATCA. It was a very lively presentation. By the end of the event, there were three raffles. One was for a set of maracas and platillas holder, second was a gift certificate for a local Mexican restaurant and the last one, a free dance lesson from Paso Fino Dance Studio. It was a very exciting event of which the Southern Regional Office attendees made sure we knew how much they enjoyed it. Lastly, we could not celebrate our month without having a table reminding everyone why we celebrate this month. We had a great time celebrating our heritage!





## Southwest Region Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

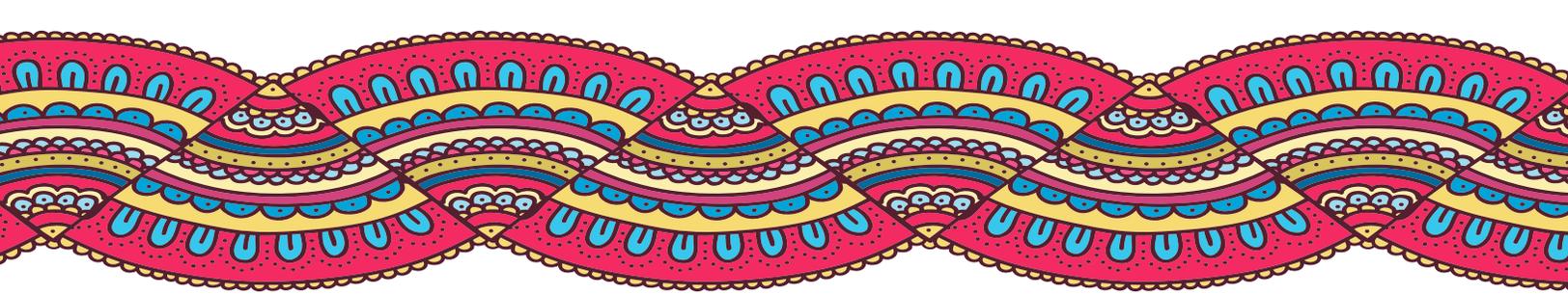
By: Lydia Gomez-Martinez, Southwest Regional Chapter Director

The Southwest Region kicked off our Hispanic Heritage Month on September 19, 2018. Our Keynote speaker was Pedro Gutierrez, the Terminal Surveillance and Weather Manager in the Central Service Center, P&R group. It was a very heartwarming speech. Thank you, Pedro for sharing such a personal story! We ended the event with coffee and Mexican cookies.

On Wednesday September 26, 2018, as part of our HHM, we held a meet and greet at Uncle Julio's Mexican Restaurant. It was nice to see some old faces.

On October 2, 2018, we had an informal event with Erik Salazar, our former National Director of Resources, who was visiting from Oklahoma, so we continued to celebrate HHM with members Mindy Moreno, Justin Perez, Lydia Gomez-Martinez, daughters Olivia Martinez and Lexus Martinez. We had a great time!

On October 10, 2018 the Southwest Chapter held their Hispanic Heritage Month Closing Ceremony. It was very well attended. Guests included Andy Atchley, Central Service Center Director; Nicholas Reyes, Deputy Director Foundational Business; Denise Knight, Director of Technical Operations and numerous members. Thank you to our guest speaker, Ignacio Flores, Division Manager, Airports – Southwest Region, for being there to support us. Thank you to Celsa Rodriguez, Rose Dailey and Gina Ortiz for organizing the close out ceremony. We ended with chips, salsa and Mexican Jarrito beverages. (Jarrito, is a brand of Mexican beverage; similar to soda pop with about fifteen different flavors)



## Outreach

By: Bill Fernandez, NHCFAE National Vice President

In the last week or so, I have had the opportunity to attend a couple of meetings and hear the Acting Administrator, Dan Elwell, and other leaders in government talk about outreach.

<b>out·reach</b>	<i>noun</i> noun: outreach /out.rēCH/
1. the extent or length of reaching out.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>an organization's involvement with or activity in the community, especially in the context of social welfare. "her goal is to increase educational outreach"</li></ul>	

Specifically, these people were talking about reaching out to young people. During the Hispanic Council on Federal Employment (HCFE) meeting, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) Executive Director of Legislative Affairs, Alicia Diaz, talked about outreach to K-12 students that **“You Can’t be, what you Can’t see!”** Dr. Jeff Pon, the Director of OPM, stated, “Public schools need examples, we need to show them what we are doing in government”.

Alicia Diaz pointed out that there are 3,333 schools in the United States that have been identified as Hispanic (by definition a Hispanic school has at least 25% Hispanic student enrollment).

For a current list of Hispanic School Districts see: [https://www.hacu.net/assnfe/CompanyDirectory.asp?STYLE=2&-COMPANY\\_TYPE=15&SEARCH\\_TYPE=0](https://www.hacu.net/assnfe/CompanyDirectory.asp?STYLE=2&-COMPANY_TYPE=15&SEARCH_TYPE=0)

Aimee Viana, Executive Director, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, stated that they are looking for ways to increase educational outreach to the Hispanic Community by highlighting Hispanic Student success. For this outreach to be successful, we need to highlight areas that are innovative and find the best path for each individual student. Encourage local ideas and strengthen private/public partnership.

Currently, 18% of the population in the U.S. is Hispanic, by 2060 that will be over 25%. Currently, 25% of K-12 students are already Hispanic, 31% in Charter Schools. Since the start of the Educational Excellence for Hispanics 1990, Hispanics have gone from 1.4 million students in post-secondary education to over 3.2 million.

In addressing the National Employee Forum (NEF), Acting

Administrator Elwell spoke very candidly, purposely not opening the notes his staff had provided, instead speaking off the top of his mind. He felt that the employee associations have the best chance for making outreach attempts to our respective communities. He stated that diversity in the agency is important and will only make the agency stronger.

Acting Administrator Elwell stated his concern was that young people are no longer interested in aviation, and he fears it is because they just don’t know about aviation. The Acting Administrator would like to see us start to reach out to young people and let them know what we do in the FAA. If we can get them interested when they are young, we might influence more young people to look for careers in aviation.

The National Airspace System of the future will require new and fresh ideas, coming from the minds of those raised on technology. This is an opportunity for all of us in the NHCFAE to continue to make positive contributions to the agency, our communities, and our country. All we really need to do is go out in our community and talk about what we do. How hard can that be?





## I Am Proud to be American Mexican

By: Vanessa Alicia, Northwest Mountain Member

I am very excited to be a part of the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees. I am first generation Mexican American on my mother's side, second generation Czech on my father's, and I have struggled with understanding who I am.

In 1943, my mother was born to teachers at a Catholic Irish School in Mexico City. My mother and her sister had the privilege of attending the school where she learned English. She continued to study English throughout her adolescence and in 1960, she started her teaching career as a preschool teacher. After four years, she decided to continue her studies for English as a Second Language teacher. With her education and forward thinking, she never considered a career in the United States. That all changed in 1970, when she was offered a once in a lifetime opportunity to start a bilingual program in Chicago, IL for their public school system, she accepted and her new life began in the United States. Her adventure to Chicago ended her English career in Mexico. Not long after arriving to the windy city, she caught the eye of a fellow teacher, my father. They married in Mexico City in 1972 and returned to Chicago where they continued their careers and started a family. I was the second of three children and the only girl. My mother officially became a U.S. citizen in 1995.

I grew up outside of Chicago in a town called Elmwood Park, a white neighborhood, with the exception of one other Mexican family. I knew I was different but wasn't sure how. Both of my parents spoke English and I thought I looked like the other kids, but I didn't realize our holiday traditions were different than my peers. Our immigrant family of five lacked the American influence that my peers grew up with. However, I did make wonderful friends at the local dance studio where I studied tap, jazz and ballet. It wasn't until high school, population 2,000 students, where I was finally exposed to other cultures, races, and religions. There I was exposed to Latin music, food and family gatherings, as well as took Spanish class with the rest of my peers. This is when I finally noticed what made me different, and realized that my heart and soul was 100% Mexican.

After high school, I attained my cosmetology license and instructor of nail technology license in Illinois, which remain current to this day. I started my associate's degree (A.A.)

studies at Triton College in Illinois but never finished. I followed my Air Force husband to Biloxi, MS where he completed his training, then on to Tacoma, Washington. However, we divorced after only 3 years.

My first federal job was with the Department of Defense (DOD) at Madigan Army Medical Center in Orthopaedics. I learned a lot about the military and what it means to be a federal employee while working for the DOD and for that I am forever grateful. My employment with Madigan outlasted my marriage by more than 10 years. I applied for jobs here and there but never thought I would have it in my heart to leave the job I loved at the hospital. Inevitably, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) pulled my packet and I was called for an interview. That created an array of emotions, especially since I hadn't interviewed in 13 years! It was as if God waited until this moment to say, it's time to go. Now I have been with the FAA just over 2 years and have learned a great deal, but I have only begun to scratch the surface. The best thing so far at the FAA has been my team, because of their unending support. I am so excited to see where my career with the FAA is going to lead me.

For the past nine years, I have also been the Art Coordinator for the YMCA in Lakewood, Washington. I am responsible for keeping our arts program strong after expanding from just dance to include visual arts, Lego robotics, variety of musical instruments, voice and culinary. I have considered taking voice lessons myself but am frequently reminded by loved ones that I have the voice for dancing. Luckily, I love teaching ballet and tap to the children in the community.

I continue to dance for myself professionally with Belly Dance Troupe Shahdaroba. We perform throughout the year and around the Puget Sound. Not only do I enjoy the performance side of Troupe Shahdaroba but every year our director designs a new costume that each of us are required to make. This often includes countless hours of hand stringing thousands of beads. I also take 3 hours of flamenco lessons a week, one full hour of palmas with 2 hours of footwork and choreography.

As I progress through life, I attribute all my success and talents back to my heart. I am proud of my heritage. Many colors, many flavors, many forms. I am American, I am Mexican, a perfect mix of both cultures.

In 2019, I hope to complete my A.A. from Pierce College.

# NHCFAE Supports Other Employee Associations

By: Veronica Salazar, MMAC Regional Chapter Director

During my most recent NHCFAE conference attendance in Fort Worth, Texas, I became aware of other employee associations working in collaboration with us by setting up tables at our event to promote their Coalitions. One of the positives of them being at our conference was they got new members. I know this because I became one. I was not the only one that walked away with the same question about that we are doing at their conferences.

It was pretty exciting for me to see the stars align when I was approved to attend the United through Leadership Joint Conference in Seattle, WA. They were calling this the “Super Conference” because it was four conferences in one (TWO, NCFAED, NAPA, and NAAN). This would be my first time attending a TWO conference which I was a new member of. The most important job for me to do at this conference was to set up a table to promote the NHCFAE and recruit new members, but so much more happened at this conference.

I was able to peek into another conference and see how they organized things. Almost the whole conference was set up with breakout sessions and you registered for them before the week of the conference in eLMS. They began their conference with a PowerPoint slide show with the name of the conference, “United through Leadership” while playing Michael Jackson’s song, “Beat It” as loud as they possibly could. My only thought was, “How cool is this!”

Some trainings provided were:

- Electrical Safety Qualified Person including Lock out Tag out
- Unmanned Aircraft Overview
- Ego Free Leadership: Ending Your Unconscious Habits
- Dealing with Prickly People: Giving and Receiving Constructive Feedback
- Career Tool Planning
- Project Management Boot Camp
- Core NAS Policy Compliance
- Quality Control and Operations Risk Management
- Comprehensive Electronic Data Analysis and Reporting
- Communicating with Tact, Diplomacy and Professionalism
- The Enlightened Leader
- Civil Rights Meetings

I was able to contact the NHCFAE chapter in Des Moines, WA and work with them to set up the NHCFAE booth at the conference. Thank you so much to those that helped. Vanessa and Karla, you are awesome!

NHCFAE Members (Vanessa, Karla, and Brandi) from Des Moines took Pam Selbe (Deputy MMAC RCD) and myself to their FAA facility for a tour. On my second visit, they taught me how to make traditional Hispanic flowers out of tissue paper. They were getting ready for Hispanic Heritage Month. I was able to bring this skill back to the Aeronautical Center and use it in our Hispanic Heritage Month Event.



## Giving Back to the Community

By: Eunice Romero, Southwest Member

On August 13, 2018, our members from the El Paso Tower, delivered 20 backpacks filled with school supplies to Montana Vista Elementary School. The demographic of the area is 99% Hispanic, with 93% of the kids considered low income and high risk, and 50% English as a Second Language (ESL). Eunice Romero, another member, grew up in the area and attended this school. The Southwest Chapter donated to this event.

This year the NHCFAE Houston Chapter members donated nonperishables during the food drive at the Houston ARTCC. All items were donated to the Houston Food Bank. The Houston Food Bank is America's largest food bank in distribution leading hunger relief in 18 southeast Texas counties.



## Houston Chapter Outreach Event

By: Hilda Banda, Houston Area Chapter Director of Administration

As part of our outreach program, the Houston Chapter sponsored Isaiah Foster and his education at Concordia University. This dedicated individual landed an academic and athletic scholarship through the University. Our sponsorship has assisted him and his team to maintain their athletic department, where he and others like him can pursue continuing education while doing something they love. You can watch him play by following the link: <http://www.cune.edu/athletics/watch-bulldogs/>



## Outreach Event: Latino Pilots Association Career Fair

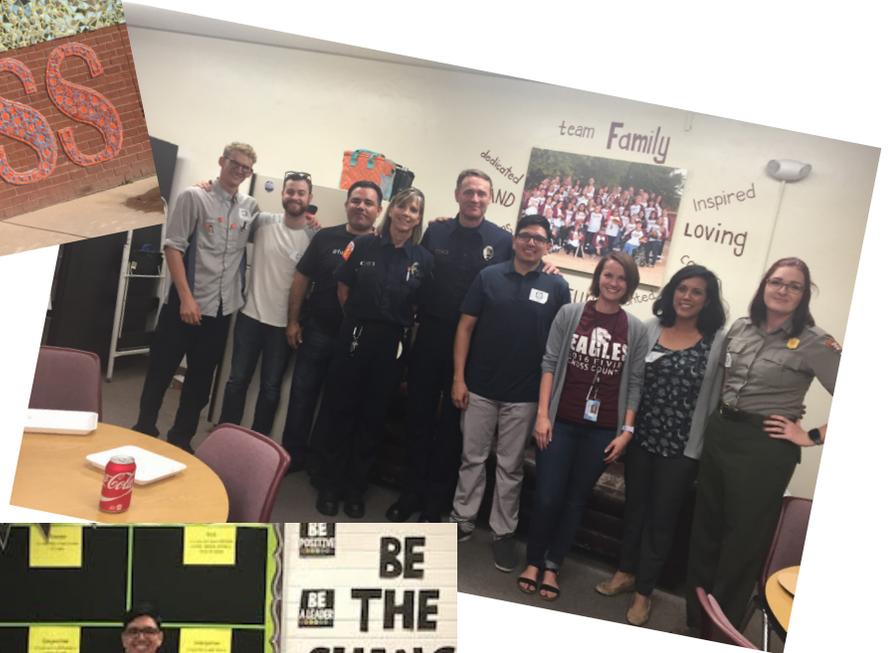
By: Jonathan Eagle, Western Pacific Regional Chapter Director

On May 12, 2018, Peter Juanpere and myself attended the Latino Pilots Association career fair at Riverside Airport. The Latino Pilots are a group of mentors for future pilots. Focusing on aspiring Latino pilots primarily, but the association is not exclusive to just Latinos. Nick Sorkki, the Latino Pilots Association (LPA) lead from the West Coast was in charge of the event and the Western Pacific Chapter has been working to increase our collaborative efforts with. Also in attendance was Dr. Paul Foster of the National Black Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NBCFAE). It was a great time and we look forward to working together in the future to continue to grow this event in Riverside.



# Introducing A+ Students to an A+ Career

By: Kristina Harris and Miguel Zepeda, Western Pacific Members



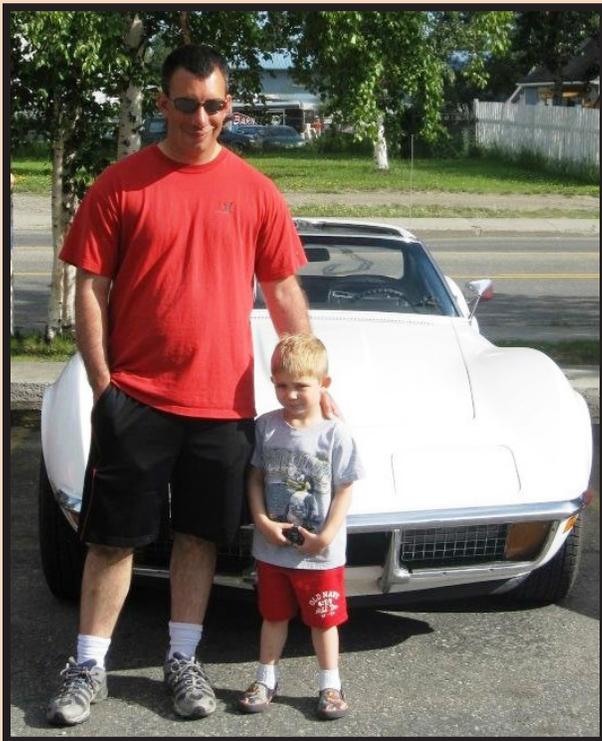
On September 21, 2018, Kristina Harris and Miguel Zepeda, both from the Tucson Area Chapter, visited Elvira Elementary school for a career day, where many different occupations were represented, such as educators, firefighters, airplane mechanics, multimedia journalists, military personnel, and law enforcement officers.

Elvira is a K-5 school on the southside of Tucson, which recently was awarded with a grade of A+ by their school district - the school has a Latino enrollment of 91%. The kids were eager to listen to all the different guests and be introduced to many exciting careers.

Kristina and Miguel teamed up for an interactive presentation, which included various video clips and a question and answer portion, with prizes for anyone that got the right answers.

Kristina spoke about her role as a Communications Specialist for the Office of Communications and how marketing communications and strategy is something that everyone does every day. After her presentation, Miguel continued by talking about his role as an air traffic controller. He explained how the air traffic system works and how to him it's the best job in the world. In the end, Kristina and Miguel could see the excitement in the kids' eyes as they were introduced to wonderful career opportunities with the FAA.

## Meet Mark Delgado from Alaska Region



I recently joined NHCFAE. I heard it was a good organization that helps people when they need help with different life problems. Also, I heard about the training conferences to help educate people on various programs to help build your skills.

I worked as an Avionics/Electronics Mechanic with the Alaska Army National Guard Technician Program at Hangar 6 JBER/FT Richardson, AK. It was time after 22 years as an Army National Guard Soldier to retire. While talking to some of my friends in the FAA, I was introduced to members of the NHCFAE. One shared some resume writing tools that she said she learned during a NHCFAE training conference and answered some questions I had about applying for an FAA position.

I started with the FAA as an Airway Transportation System Specialist (ATSS) back in May 2017. As an ATSS, I worked on all the ground equipment that tells the aircraft where the runway is and assist the aircraft onto the runway.

Now, I am a new hire Avionics Inspector with the Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) in Anchorage, Alaska. I applied for the Avionics Inspector the same time I applied for the ATSS position. I received a phone call asking if I was still interested in the position as an Avi-

onics Inspector. I said “Yes.” I interviewed for the position. A couple of months went by when I received a job offer from Human Resources. I transferred over to the FSDO in July 2018.

My military experience started in 1996 to 2000. I was in the Active Duty U.S. Army as a Cavalry Scout (19D) and stationed at FT. Polk, LA. I then joined the Alaska Army National Guard in 2000 and retired in February 2018.

I went to College at Lewis Clark State College in Moscow, Idaho after graduating High School in Anchorage, Alaska.

My dad’s side of the family is from Spain and my mom’s side of the family is from Idaho. I have never lived in Spain, but have visited Barcelona. I would like to go see where my family came from one day.

I enjoy racing and fixing Corvettes, skydiving, and enjoying the outdoors with my wife Laura Delgado and our son Jacob Delgado, who is in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

## Meet Brandi Walters from Northwest Mountain

Northwest Mountain welcomes a new member, Brandi Walters, Western Service Area Air Traffic Training Coordinator, Training Administrative Support Team.

Here are a few words from Brandi, “I am very excited to join the Hispanic Coalition! Initially, I was solicited by Karla Valdez to join the Coalition and made my final decision after meeting so many wonderful Coalition members in 2018 at the conference in Fort Worth, TX. I also participated in some of the activities from the conference.”





## Congrats Ralph!

After 44 plus years, on July 31, 2018, Ralph Escobedo, the Southwest Regional Chapter Deputy Director, retired. Thank you for your Support, Contributions, Valuable Leadership, Dedication, Commitment, and Vision to our Organization. CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RETIREMENT!!!



## Good Bye and Thanks!

By: Mindy Moreno, Membership Chair

First and foremost, I want to thank the Coalition for giving me such a wonderful opportunity as your Membership Chair for the past five years! Since being the chair in 2013, I've gained lifelong friends and experiences I'll never forget. Like many of our members and potential members, I wondered, how does the Coalition benefit me? Then I became active and attended the conferences and it became obvious. I met mentors, colleagues, and high-level Executives from all FAA Lines of Business that were open to answer any questions and engage in conversations that would not have occurred without the help of the Coalition, as well as networking opportunities that an office setting cannot provide. Leaving my hometown in Northern Virginia and becoming a transplant in the great state of Texas, I didn't have many connections and it was hard to call Texas home. Through the NHCFAE, I was able to meet friends who turned into family which made Texas feel like home. I will forever be grateful.



I really want to end my appointment by encouraging members and potential members to become active and engage in what the Coalition has to offer. Get involved and attend the conferences! You will gain the knowledge to be where you want to be in your career and you'll meet the people to support you to get you there! With that, I have to give a huge thank you to the people who have supported me throughout my tenure with the Coalition: Misty Peña, Susie Diaz, Erik Salazar, Ed Cardenas, Oscar Torres, Justin Perez and Lydia Gomez-Martinez. Thank you all for standing by me, cheering me on, and the countless amount of laughter we've shared!

## Membership Updates

**By: Mindy Moreno, Membership Chair**  
**March 2018 – October 2018**

Name	Region	Position	Recruited By
McKay Gerber	SW	Air Traffic Operations Manager	David Gonzales
Rafael Otero	SO	Airway Transportation System Specialist	Angela Ciuro
Ramon Caceres	NE	Front Line Manager	Kurtis Proctor
Thomas Candelario	AK	Supervisor Flight Data Communications	
Pamela Selbe	AC	Computer Specialist Project Manager	John Espinosa
Lory Ferrer	SW	Administrative Officer	Lydia Gomez-Martinez
Jose Garcia	NM	Operational Supervisor	Junior Zavaca
Antonio Garcia	WP	Airway Transportation System Specialist	
Melissa Cummings	AGL	Air Traffic Control Supervisor	Brendan Villegas
Julio Galarza	AGL	Aviation Safety Inspector	Raquel Ysasi-Huerta
James Sudduth	ASW	Supervisory Air Traffic Control Specialist	David Gonzales
Kathy Conner	MMAC	Program Analyst	Veronica Salazar
Sebastian Henao	NM	Airway Transportation System Specialist	Karla Rodriguez
William McClinton	GL		Brendan Villegas
Jorge Lopez Arce	SO	Airway Transportation System Specialist	Randall Resto
Micah Freeman	WP	Staff Support Specialist	Jonathan Eagle
Toninett Harrison	WP	Air Traffic Control Specialist	Jonathan Eagle
Mitzi Williams	AL	Aviation Safety Assistant	Sylvia Harvath
Jimmy Chavez	WA	Human Resource Specialist	Ana Pena
Mark Delgado	AL	Avionics Inspector	Maria Smith / Sylvia
Melissa Rivera	SO	Airspace & Flight Procedures Evaluation	Edward Cardenas
Jose Negron	SO		Bernice Merly
David Williams	AC	Logistics Management Specialist	Veronica Salazar
Ana Pena	WA	Data Analyst, EEO Specialist	Karen Perez
Brandi Walters	NM	Management & Program Analyst	Karla Valdez
Mark DePlasco	SO	Supervisory Air Traffic Control Specialist	Faviola Garcia
Freddie Green	SO	Training Support Manager	Faviola Garcia
Kendall Scott	WP	Air Traffic Control Specialist	Jonathan Eagle