

Monday, March 27, 2023

Keynote Speaker



**Minita Ramirez, PhD.
President | Laredo College**

Maria Minerva Ramirez, Ph.D., President of Laredo College, is an educational leader who has distinguished herself in both public and private sectors of education. Her career has intersected the field of education from pre-kinder to post-graduate studies. Her lifelong goal has been to create seamless transitions and support services that can provide the appropriate information and care to individuals who do not have the skill set or prior knowledge to navigate the numerous higher education requirements. She has held numerous leadership roles in higher education and served on local, state, and national boards.

Dr. Minita is a graduate of J. W. Nixon High School, Class of 1979, holds a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education from TAMIU, a Master of Science in School Administration from TAMU-Kingsville, and a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from Capella University. In 2016, she earned a Graduate Fellowship with the University of Michigan's National Center for Institutional Diversity and graduated from the Texas Governor's Executive Development Program, LBJ School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas at Austin, 2017.

Today, Dr. Minita is the first female president in Laredo College's 75-year history. As a native of Laredo, she understands the desperate situation of a community that needs educational and workforce training support across the tri-county area Laredo College serves. It is through her initiation, that several workforce programs are under expansion, and new ones are in the works.

She understands the crucial role partnerships with four-year institutions are and works closely with them to strengthen and enhance them. The conservation of the College's home, the historical Fort McIntosh, is also a major responsibility that she embraces. It is her honor to preserve and protect the historical grounds where U S Army soldiers of the 1st Infantry guarded the Texas frontier. She is transforming lives and collaborates to enrich the communities she serves proudly.

Dr. Minita has proudly served in her professional capacity and has worked diligently for the community as President of The Washington's Birthday Celebration Association, Chairman of the Mr. South Texas Committee, President of the Society of Martha Washington, President of the Texas Council of Chief Student Affairs Officers Texas and proud board member of the Laredo Boys and Girls Club. In addition, Dr. Minita has served on the Laredo Independent School District Board of Trustees and chairs the Curriculum and Instruction Committee. She is a member of the Caballeros de la Republica del Rio Grande and has served as a board member of the Sisters of Mercy-Casa de Misericordia, Women's Leadership of Texas, and member of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and University (HACU) to name a few.

Dr. Minita Ramirez was the Vice President for Student Success at Texas A&M International University (TAMIU). She joined TAMIU in 2001 and has held various administrative and faculty positions. Her commitment continues to be Recruitment, Retention, and Graduation of underserved students and communities of South Texas and Northern Mexico. She initiated intensive and intrusive programming which for 18 years, supported the continuous growth in the student population of approximately 130%. In addition, she is committed to facilitating the seamless student transition from high school to University and supporting student enrollment and on-campus engagement, so that all students can successfully participate in learning that enhances their lives and the lives of their families and communities. This 2018-19 year, under her guidance TAMIU announced their largest freshman class welcoming 1244 Dustdevils.

In addition, she has helped manage the family business, Carmin's Flower Shop, and El Plateado Ranch. Dr. Ramirez is most proud of her son Ruben, a graduate of the Laredo ISD, Hector J. Garcia Early College High School, and graduate of the A.R. Sanchez School of Business (2018 and 2020). She is equally proud of her life's partner, Associate District Court Judge, David E. Garcia.

Prior to joining Laredo College, she was the Vice President for Student Success at Texas A&M International University leading the enrollment management and student life programming. She has taught history and government at both middle and high school levels with the Laredo Independent School District. She directed the United Independent School District Technology Innovative Challenge grant, which led the pathway of infusing technology into the classroom setting and instruction. She has focused her research on "Hispanic Migration to Higher Education," examining the deterrents and hesitations high school students have as they transition to higher education. Using her education experience, Dr. Ramirez was also employed by Silver Burdett Ginn and Prentice Hall, K-12 educational publishing divisions of Simon and Schuster publishing. During her ten years there, she was part of the educational consultant team,

contributing author for the Reading, U.S. History, and Music textbooks, academic trainer, and textbook sales representative.

Throughout her career, she has been honored by many organizations she is proud of all of them and honored to have been considered. To mention some, LULAC Tejano Achiever, The STAR of Texas Award by Representative Richard Raymond, and most recently the NASPA Region III John Jones award for outstanding performance as a Senior Student Affairs Officer.

PANEL: What is on Your Leadership Playlist?

Dr. Tamara Brown | *The University of Texas at Arlington*



Dr. Tamara Brown recently joined the University of Texas at Arlington, one of the most diverse campuses in the nation, as Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. In addition to UTA's 10 colleges, she leads Faculty Affairs, Student Success, Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, Global Educational Outreach, and Libraries.

Dr. Brown received her doctorate degree in clinical psychology from the University of Illinois. She also attained a master's of divinity from Asbury Theological Seminary. Dr. Brown has served in various administrative positions, most recently as executive dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences at the University of North Texas.

Dr. Diana Hopes | *Collin College*



Dr. Diana Hopes, Campus Executive Dean for Collin College Farmersville Campus, is a visionary, passionate, and high-energy instructional leader who has championed numerous initiatives focused on student's college and career readiness and academic success. Her classroom experience and extensive background in curriculum and program development provide a solid foundation for student advocacy, particularly for minority and underserved populations. Dr. Hopes holds a Masters in Bilingual Education from Southern Methodist University, a doctorate in Supervision, Curriculum and Instruction from Texas A&M

University-Commerce, and is a Fulbright Scholar.

Dr. Stella Lovato | *San Antonio College*



Dr. Stella Lovato currently serves as San Antonio College's Vice President for College Services and as Interim Vice President for Academic Success, making her responsible for the academic management of the college as well as all key services, operations and strategic planning for the largest institution in the Alamo Colleges District.

She began her long affiliation with SAC as a student, earning an associate degree in dental assisting. She then embarked on an academic journey leading to bachelor's and master's degrees in Health Professions at Texas State University, a master's in Education at the University of Texas at San Antonio, and a Ph.D. in Adult Professional and Community

Education at Texas State University.

Prior to her current leadership positions, she served as Professor and Chair for the Department of Allied Health and Kinesiology. She also has held a variety of institutional service roles, including as Coach for the 4 Disciplines of Execution, Vice President of the Faculty Senate, and Chair for the Alamo Colleges District Chairs Council.

Most recently, she helped draft the 2022-2025 strategic plan for SAC, which will further develop the institution's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

As one of the college's most senior and visionary leaders, Dr. Lovato served on the Alamo Colleges District team that worked to win the 2018 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, which honors organizations with an unceasing drive for radical innovation, thoughtful leadership, and administrative improvement. She also contributed to the college-wide effort that resulted in the 2021 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, making SAC the number-one community college in the nation, and the 2022 Seal of Excelencia, awarded to educational institutions for exceptional service to Latino students.

Dr. Rama Yelkur | *Texas Woman's University*



Rama Yelkur is the Dean of the College of Business and Professor of Marketing at Texas Woman's University. Prior to that she served in a variety of roles, including the Dean of the School of Business at St. John Fisher College in New York, Dean of the Carmona College of Business at Saginaw Valley State University in Michigan, and Director of International Business Programs and Professor of Marketing at the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire and a Marketing faculty member at Texas A&M International University. At Saginaw Valley State University, she also served as the Director of the Stevens Center for Family Business, serving family businesses through succession planning for the next generation. Yelkur has published articles in various journals such as *Journal of Advertising Research*, *International Business Review*, *Journal of Euromarketing*, *Journal of Marketing Communications*, *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, and *Business Horizons*. She has consulted and conducted corporate training internationally including in countries such as France, Portugal, Spain and Vietnam. She is the recipient of several grants through the U.S. Department of Education to assist SMEs become globally competent and to conduct student programming. Her passion is to educate students to become globally competent and provide them with the skills to function in a contemporary, globally intertwined, technologically advanced workplace. Yelkur has nearly three decades of consulting experience in sports marketing, advertising, and sponsorships, working with organizations such as Kimberly Clark, NBC Universal, and the NFL. Her work on Super Bowl advertising, in particular, has been cited in national media including *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *Forbes Magazine*, *Fortune*, *Kiplinger* and *USA Today*. She is also frequently contacted by CNBC, CNN, FOX TV, and producers of shows and media buyers regarding Super Bowl advertising. She has extensive experience on public and private boards. She is the past chair of the Women Administrators in Management Education Affinity Group of AACSB – International and has organized programming to develop leadership among women and minorities. She serves on the Board of Directors of the National Women's Hall of Fame, Junior Achievement of Dallas and KERA of North Texas. Rama is a Certified Global Business Professional.

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

Keynote Speaker



Dr. Jennifer Cowley
President | The University of Texas at Arlington

Jennifer Cowley is the first female president of The University of Texas at Arlington and the 10th overall. She is also a professor of public affairs and planning in the College of Architecture, Planning, and Public Affairs.

Dr. Cowley has dedicated her career to public service. Before joining UT Arlington, she was the provost and vice president for academic affairs at the University of North Texas, where she led economic development partnerships, advanced diversity and inclusion initiatives, fostered student success, bolstered the research portfolio, and helped increase enrollment. She worked at Ohio State University for 16 years, serving as the vice provost for capital planning and regional campuses, associate dean of the College of Engineering, head of city and regional planning, and a professor during her time there. While at OSU, Cowley also led four regional campuses, helped develop the President's and Provost's Teaching Institute to aid faculty in improving teaching quality and advancing effectiveness, and created a capital plan that led to more than \$1 billion in development over a five-year period.

Prior to entering academia, Cowley worked in city government in Amarillo and College Station. She earned a Ph.D. in urban and regional science, master's degree in urban planning, and bachelor's degree in political science from Texas A&M University and master's degrees in interdisciplinary studies and public administration from UNT. She is a fellow of American

Institute of Certified Planners and a member of the executive committee of the Council on Academic Affairs in the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities.

An Arlington native, Cowley and her husband, Jon, have a high-school-age son, Nathan, and a pet chinchilla named Chinchi.

PANEL: Her Story

Shawnda Navarro Floyd, Ed. D., J.D. | Dallas College



Dr. Shawnda Navarro Floyd has served as Provost for Dallas College, one of the largest community college systems in the US, since 2020. In this inaugural role, Dr Floyd is Chief Academic Officer for the college and oversees seven academic schools, three instructional support units and approximately 900 full-time faculty and 2000 adjunct faculty across an academic enterprise that serves 100k students annually.

As Provost, Dr Floyd has overseen large-scale transformation in academics at Dallas College. These include: building the largest program of dual enrollment in the nation, the reorganization of curriculum and faculty across career-focused schools and the implementation of four-year degrees by one of the first community colleges in the nation. Previously, Dr Floyd served as Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Success at the North Lake campus.

In her 20 years of experience in higher education Dr Floyd has served in a variety of roles driven by a passion for working in community colleges and a personal mission to increase college access for minoritized populations and first-generation students. She is regarded by colleagues and peers as an innovative, collaborative leader who centers equity in strategy and a strong advocate of student and employee success.

After earning a bachelor's degree in English Literature from Rider University, Dr Floyd obtained a Juris Doctorate from Temple University. Her law practice included service as a Deputy Attorney General for the State of New Jersey. It was her life-long passion for English Literature that led to a career transition into higher education. Prior to Dallas College, Dr Floyd spent eleven year at Brookdale Community College in New Jersey as faculty and ending her tenure in the role of Department Chair.

Shawnda also holds an Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership with a Community College emphasis from Rowan University.

Jana Hawley Ph.D. | University of North Texas



Dr. Jana Hawley has led a full life as an award-winning teacher, engaged researcher, committed mentor and a servant leader. Dr. Hawley received the 2022 Distinguished Scholar Award from International Textile and Apparel Association. She has more than 150 scholarly works, received more than \$1.5M in grants, and raised more than \$5M in advancement impact. Hawley earned her PhD from University of Missouri and is most noted for her leadership and scholarship in the areas of textile recycling and fashion industry sustainability.

Dr. Jianwei Niu | The University of Texas at San Antonio



Dr. Jianwei Niu is a professor and the Associate Dean of University College at The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). served as the Interim Director for the School of Data Science from 2019 to 2021 and was a Microsoft President's Endowed Professor from 2020 to 2021. Dr. Niu received her Ph.D. in computer science from University of Waterloo and started the tenure-track assistant professor position at UTSA in 2005. Her teaching was recognized by the Outstanding Graduate Mentor Award and the President's Distinguished Achievement Award at UTSA. Dr. Niu has published more than 60 peer-reviewed articles.

Linda L. Head | Lone Star College



Linda L. Head oversees the Office of External and Employer Relations at Lone Star College (LSC), serving as Senior Associate Vice Chancellor.

Linda Leto Head serves as Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for Lone Star College's Office of External & Employer Relations. Serving more than 80,000 credit students per semester, Lone Star College has eight campuses and multiple community and workforce centers of excellence. Linda has spent her 30-year community college career committed to excellence in workforce and economic development, and adult basic education.

As a leader for the Office of External & Employer Relations, Linda's responsibilities include: external affairs, continuing education, student job development, corporate training, veteran affairs, and economic development. She earned her Master of Science degree in occupational technology majoring in corporate training from the University of Houston, and Bachelor of Science degree in business administration majoring in human resources from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

She has chaired or been a member of numerous community college, government, and chamber of commerce boards and councils both in Houston, state-wide, and nationally, current list below:

Professional Affiliations & Leadership Roles

- American Association of Community Colleges, Commission for Workforce & Economic Development, council
- Greater Houston Partnership, Upskill Houston, council
- Greater Houston Partnership, Regional Economic Development, council
- Greater Houston Women's Chamber of Commerce, board
- Texas Association for Business, board
- The Woodlands Chamber of Commerce, Executive Council, prior board chairman
- Yes to Youth (local non-profit for children in crisis), Gala co-chair

Awards

- Top 30 Women, "Top 30 Influential Women of Houston"
 - Greater Houston Women's Chamber of Commerce, "Trailblazer"
 - Houston Business Journal, "Women Who Mean Business"
 - Interfaith of The Woodlands, "Those Who Share, Education"
 - National Council for Continuing Education & Training, "Leadership"
 - World Affairs Council, "Houston's Global Leader of Influence"
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