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Member Spotlight: Norma Perez-Brena, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Family Studies and Human Development, University of Arizona; Latinx Caucus Communications Committee Member, Latinx Caucus Steering Committee; Co-Organizer of “The Construction of the Other: Development, Consequences, and Applied Implications of Racism, Prejudice, and Discrimination."

AUTHOR

Norma Perez-Brena, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Family Studies and Human Development
Norton School of Ecology, University of Arizona

Faculty Page

Why did you decide to choose developmental science as a course of study or career?

I am passionate about engaging in research that uplifts and empowers youth and families. I am particularly interested in centering the experiences of youth from marginalized communities to better inform policy and practice.

Who inspire you and why (and/or who inspired you to go into your chose career)?

Early in my college career I was exposed to the work of Carola Suarez-Orozco, Beverly Daniel Tatum, Jean Phinney, Linda Juang, Alejandro Portes, and Ruben Rumbaut, among many others. This work helped me better understand and reflect on my own experiences growing up in the United States after immigrating from Mexico at the age of 12. Having experienced firsthand the power of one's community being represented in a multilayered, nuanced, and strengths-based perspective, I was inspired to become a developmental and family scientist. Throughout my career, I have and continue to be inspired by our students and emerging scholars who bring their whole selves to their academic endeavors, ask challenging questions, and are engaging in innovative methods that center the voices of youth.

What advice would you give to a Grad student beginning their Ph.D. studies in Developmental Science or related?

Take time to identify your "why" (why are you doing this work?), because this will be your guiding force throughout your studies and career. Develop a network of colleagues who support you, inspire you, and challenge you to do and be better. Be willing to take chances, be different, and think differently. Unique perspectives help promote innovation and strengthen our field.

What is your best SRCD memory?

My favorite SRCD memory was attending and co-hosting "The Construction of the Other" special topics meeting. Attending an event in Puerto Rico, celebrating Latinx culture, reconnecting with and meeting new colleagues, and being inspired by the great work shared by our students and emerging scholars combined to create a reinvigorating experience, especially after two years of virtual programing.

What are your hobbies?

I run, make pottery, belong to a mentoring program for adolescent girls, and spend time with family. Running and pottery provide me with a space to meditate and process new ideas. Mentoring and spending time with family help ground me and remind me that I am part of something bigger than myself.

Why did you join the Latinx Caucus and how does it facilitate connection among members all year long?

The Latinx Caucus represents an academic family that aims to elevate and support its members throughout their careers. They provide mentorship and funding opportunities for emerging scholars, provide various mechanisms (e.g., awards, spotlights) to elevate the work by Latinx scholars and those who work with Latinx youth and families, and provide multiple mechanisms to develop connections through the Cafecitos held at various conference and the Google listserv. Through their work with the Quad Caucus, and the larger SRCD organization, they advocate for their members and the issues that impact the youth and families we study. I am truly grateful for the friends and colleagues I have met through the Latinx Caucus.

Visit the

LATINX CAUCUS WEBSITE

to learn about benefits, networking opportunities, and more!