NEWS | POSTED SEPTEMBER 20, 2023

Member Spotlight: Koraly Pérez-Edgar, Ph.D.

McCourtney Professor of Child Studies at The Pennsylvania State University; Member of the SRCD Latinx Caucus.

AUTHOR

Koraly Pérez-Edgar, Ph.D.

McCourtney Professor

Faculty Page

What/Who inspired you to go into Child Development Research?

My career was founded on reading one book--Flowers for Algernon. I don't claim it's a great book or that it is a classic. However, it was the first time that I realized that people did psychological research as a career, and asked questions, and made mistakes, and kept going. It showed me the fuzzy edges of possibility.

Do you have a mentor or mentors who have been instrumental in your career and, if so, who and how?

I have to point to the ongoing mentorship of Nathan Fox. I first met him as a 24-year-old graduate student. In the 25 years that followed, he has supported my career, displayed more confidence in me than I have ever been able to muster, and has kept me on my toes. I really can't imagine where my career would be without

his guidance, and I am also grateful for how he modeled a work-life balance even while teetering on the edge of a crazy portfolio.

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

Don't try to recreate anyone else's career or their definition of success. First, there are clear cohort effects and historical forces won't let us follow the path past generations followed--even if we wanted to. Second, there are paths that were never available before. Graduate students today are better trained and more aware of methods, context, and community than past cohort. Third, even when looking at your current peers, you are all coming from different places, with different interests, experiences, and goals. If we really believe in our own theories, we have to make room for multifocality. At the end of the day, you have to be comfortable in your own skin and others can't own that for you.

What is your best SRCD memory?

I have a lot--but I'll pick Albuquerque in 1999. It was a last-minute change in location, and we all scrambled for lodging. A group of us grad students ended up in a truck stop outside of town with a (not that) periodic shuttle that would take us to the convention center. There was a lot of bonding on that trip, and I got to see such great speakers and learn about new work. Before YouTube and Zoom, this was **it**.

How do you relax when you are not teaching or conducting research?

I am a sucker for murder mysteries. Give me a dead body, a suspect, and an unassuming detective, and I'm in! Poirot, Marple, Columbo...all of it.

Visit the

LATINX CAUCUS

to learn about benefits, networking opportunities, and more!