

## Patricia Torres Nájera, PhD

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### SUMMARY

- Over 25 years of leadership in higher education, a servant leader using values of working together, being a change agent and impacting the lives of students' success.
- Provide leadership, oversight and responsibility of MATC's Oak Creek campus.
- Outstanding interpersonal skills and proven track record of working with and between senior administration, department leaders, faculty, staff, and students.
- Extensive experience with strategic and organizational planning in recruitment, retention, and graduation efforts.
- Strong record of professional service and leadership with nonprofit organizations, schools, municipalities, and higher education in Greater Milwaukee.
- Highly skilled professional with a proven track record in developing innovative programs and strategic partnerships that drive operational effectiveness and improve community visibility.
- Well-established expert in evaluation, assessment, and data analysis for program development, recruitment and completion initiatives, and community partnerships.
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion, working with and for people of diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Robust understanding of support services needed for students including: Scholarships and Financial Aid, Crisis Management, Nutrition, Health and Child Care.

### ACHIEVEMENTS

- Collaborated with leadership in over 100 nonprofit organizations, departments, schools, municipalities, and committees interacting with staff, teachers, students and residents on education and life quality issues in Milwaukee and Southeastern Wisconsin.
- Facilitated faculty participation and cooperation on teaching and research initiatives focused on student interaction, recruitment and retention, engagement and success in the classroom and outside of campus.
- Experience with fundraising efforts with corporations, private foundations, individual donations for campus-wide initiatives and sponsored projects.
- Grant writer on identification of funding sources, development and review of proposals, management of awards, interpretation of guidelines, compliance with all reports.
- Experience with awards totaling over \$10 million dollars from the Department of Education, National Science Foundation, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Potawatomi Foundation and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
- Provided nearly two decades of leadership in Milwaukee Public Schools serving on governance councils working with principals, teachers, parents and students.
- Coordinated university-wide efforts on planning, implementing and building consensus with innovative initiatives including: *The Milwaukee Idea*, *The United Community Center* and *UW-Milwaukee Hispanic Serving Institution Plan*.
- Facilitated and provided presentations to committees, classroom environments,

community groups and city-wide meetings. High comfort level with large and small groups, building consensus and generating action plans.

- Appointed by executive leaders in the City of Milwaukee and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee to serve and lead special projects as needed.

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

### **Executive Director, Oak Creek campus**

Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) 2022 - Present

- Plan, design and execution of strategic initiatives that yield increased partnership building with community based organizations, local school districts, foundations, donors and other partners.
- Leadership role in Admissions Services, Workforce Development, Academics and Career Services.
- Responsible for strategic plan for designation of Hispanic Serving Institution.
- Manage regional campus with Associate Degree (30) programs, Technical Diploma programs (35), 15 Certificate programs with 400 sections per semester; 130 acres, 92 classrooms, and 275 faculty/staff.

### **Co-Lead, Chancellor's Committee for Hispanic Serving Institution**

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) | 2016 – 2022

#### *Overview:*

- Oversee the development of Recruitment and Retention Plan for UWM to become Emerging Hispanic Serving Institution. Manage advisory committees, including a variety of stakeholders, provide regular updates and communication about progress to UWM cabinet members.
- Develop plan for gaps in delivery by UWM's Office of Enrollment and Admissions.
- Work university-wide to create outstanding learning environments, understanding student support services, experiential learning, environments, scholarship and financial aid, registration and admissions.
- Support and develop innovative pilot programs for new freshman, transfer and non traditional students.
- Collaborate with the Office of Development to secure extramural funding from prospective donors on university-wide and special projects.
- Planning team member of Roberto Hernandez Center fundraiser to retain and graduate Latinx students.

### **Director of Partnerships and Development, Electa Quinney Institute**

UWM | 2014 – 2022

#### *Overview:*

- Lead staff for proposal development on research and program grants funded by the federal agencies and private foundations to support faculty and students. Responsibilities included developing extramural grants and contracts, administering budgets and managing staff

(faculty, academic staff, graduate assistants, and undergraduate students).

- Awarded over \$5 million from United States Federal government including: Departments of Education, Housing and Urban Development and National Science Foundation.
- Responsible for leading and creating partnerships, memorandums of understandings between three tribal colleges in Wisconsin and Great Lake Region. Creation of innovative programs that discover, value and examine traditional ways of Native Americans.
- Increased administrative responsibilities with Office of Development, Office of Sponsored Programs, Dean of Students, Office of Dual Enrollment, Graduate School, Career Center, Office of Central Advising, Online Program Council, Financial Aid offices and fourteen colleges/schools at UWM to improve student success, collaboration, and engagement.

### **Associate Director of Engagement, Center for Urban Initiatives and Research,**

UWM | 1998 - 2014

#### *Overview:*

- Worked alongside Deans of colleges, faculty and staff in departments to foster collaboration and partnerships for applied research opportunities at the undergraduate and graduate level. Public engagement efforts led to contributions for UWM's successful application for Carnegie Engagement Classification.
- Provided expertise with UWM and community leaders on transformational change on The Milwaukee Idea. Formed affinity groups that created 10 big ideas in Education, Economy and the Environment.
- Created team oriented experiential learning experiences for hundreds of students matching their academic programs with workforce development opportunities. Developed student centered career planning activities of resume and cover letter preparation, career exploration, mock interviews, and networking.

### **Community Organizer**

Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Hope (M.I.C.A.H) | 1992 – 1998

#### *Overview:*

- Created city-wide membership of MICAHA with the joining of southside Latinx churches to predominantly northside African American churches.
- Planned, led and provided training to church membership and clergy on the basics of community empowerment and change.
- Facilitated difficult discussions between African American, Polish and Latin clergy on southside about issues of race, ethnicity, and citizenship.

### **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

- School of Education, UWM | 2015-Present
  - "Introduction to Social Change and Empowerment (Undergraduate and Graduate)
- Center for Excellence Teaching and Learning, UWM - curriculum development for Multicultural Inclusion and Equity workshops and participated in course design (online and blended formats).

## **EDUCATION**

- PhD, Urban Studies | University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee | 2018  
- *“We Were the Outsiders and Treated as Such:” Community Activism and the Intersections of Ethnicity, Gender, Class and Race Among Latinas in Milwaukee.*”
- M.S., Urban Studies | University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee | 2003  
- *“A Historical Analysis of Mitchell Street and Goldmann’s Department Store.”*
- B.S., Economics | University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee | 1991

## **CIVIC APPOINTMENTS**

- Board Member, Social Development Commission - MATC Representative | 2024 - Present
- Board Member, Cesar Chavez Business Improvement District, City of Milwaukee  
| Appointments by Mayor Cavalier Johnson | 2024 - Present
- Board Member, 27<sup>th</sup> Street Business Improvement District with the City of Milwaukee and the City of Greenfield | Appointments by Mayor Tom Barrett | 2017- 2019
- Chair, City Plan Commission | 1999 - 2019  
Appointment by Mayor Tom Barrett, original appointment Mayor John O. Norquist (1999).
- School Governance Officer with Milwaukee Public Schools District | 1998 – 2019
- Board membership with over 20 nonprofit organizations in the Greater Milwaukee Area.

## **CONSULTING**

- Torres Consulting, LLC | 1992-Present