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Irán Barrera is an associate professor in the department of social work at California State University – Fresno. Barrera spent his last five years as an assistant professor at the University of Texas-Pan American in which he taught courses on mental health and conducted research along the U.S. / Mexico border. Barrera received his master’s degree in social work (MSW) from California State University - Long Beach in 2003; his Ph.D. in Social Work from the University of Texas - Arlington and La Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, México in 2008. Barrera has extensive experience working with minority communities (African-American/Hispanic) in California and Texas and in 2005 was awarded a minority fellowship from the Council on Social Work Education to study Hispanic mental health. Barrera’s research interests include examining mental health literacy in Mexican-American communities and mental health care disparities in Hispanics.

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**José Ángel Guajardo** In his 2004 publication of The New Americans, author Enrique Trueba called José Ángel Guajardo "an organic intellectual," an apt descriptor for the goat herder with a 4th grade education from Dr. Coss, Nuevo Leon, who would become an important community based researcher in Elsa, Texas. Que en paz descansar el gran intelectual, José A. Guajardo, 1936-2013.

**Miguel A. Guajardo** is an associate professor in the department of educational leadership at Texas State University. He is a co-founder of the Llano Grande Center for Research and Development and serves as co-chair of the board of directors. His research interests are participatory research methodologies, community building, race relations, and leadership development.

**John Michael Gonzalez** is an assistant professor at the University of Texas-Pan American in the Department of Social Work. He received his BA in psychology and sociology and Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin. He received his MSW from the School of Social Work at Texas State University-San Marcos. He authored and co-authored publications on older minorities and mental health services, older adult resilience. He is a co-author of the book, “Narratives of Social and Economic Justice.” His research interests are aging and delivery of mental health services to older minorities, culturally competent practice, and resilience in older adults.
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Sonia Hernández is a Rio Grande Valley native who specializes in the U.S.-Mexican borderlands, gender and labor in Modern Mexico, and Chicana/o history. She earned her PhD in Latin American History from the University of Houston in 2006. Her most recent book, Working Women into the Borderlands (Texas A&M University Press, 2014) is the recipient of the Jim Parish Award for Documentation of Regional and Local History. After working in the History Department at the University of Texas-Pan American for nearly eight years she will be joining the History Department at Texas A&M University in the Fall of 2014.


Marina Malli is a second-year student in the master’s program in English literature and cultural studies at the University of Texas-Pan American. She is originally from Athens, Greece, where she completed her undergraduate studies in English. She is currently working on an MA thesis which deals with Christmas as a construct in the American culture. She hopes to pursue a Ph.D. in the area of literary theory and cultural studies.

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Josie Méndez-Negrete, associate professor of Mexican American Studies at the University of Texas at San Antonio, received her PhD at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Published by Duke University Press as a revised edition in 2006 and reprinted in 2010, Las hijas de Juan: Daughters Betrayed continues to be a bestseller. A Life On Hold, an examination of mental illness in the family, is under review, and she continues to workshop and perform Cancionera Nací: Toña La Negra—a multimedia one-woman show—as a way to engage discussion on the third root or African legacy of Mexico.

Dagoberto Eli Ramírez was born in Roma, Starr County, Texas, graduated from Roma High School, and attended the University of Oklahoma. He taught at Ringgold Junior High School in Rio Grande City, completing his Pan American University BA in English. He taught English, history, geography, and leadership at La Joya ISD. Dagoberto worked as an Education Specialist at Region One ESC in Edinburg, Texas, then earned his MA and Ph.D. in educational leadership The University of Texas-Pan American.

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Javier Villarreal was born in McAllen, raised in México and educated on both sides of the Rio Grande. He completed his primary and secondary education in San Miguel, Tamaulipas and graduated from McAllen High School in 1974. Javier received his BA in Spanish, BFA in art and his MA in Spanish in from Pan American University. Subsequently, he completed a Ph.D. in Hispanic linguistics from the University of Texas at Austin. His research interests are varied: from studying languages in contact and language variation, to folklore and creative writing. He has presented and published professional papers and creative works in these fields. Currently, Villarreal is a professor of Spanish at Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi.

Joel Zapata was born and raised in the Texas Panhandle. Since then he has lived on the frontera and in Central Texas. He graduated with a BA in history and a minor in anthropology from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). His research focuses on telling the stories of immigration, settlement, and community of Mexicana/os on the frontera and Tejas. He is especially interested in the labor and education of Mexican origin women and children and is currently pursuing his Ph.D. at Southern Methodist University.