

AAHHE

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF HISPANICS IN HIGHER
EDUCATION, INC.



OUTSTANDING DISSERTATION AWARDS 2027

DEADLINE: AUGUST 7, 2026

OUTSTANDING DISSERTATION AWARDS 2027

INTRODUCTION

The American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE) proudly announces the 2027 Outstanding Dissertation Awards. Although Hispanics are the fastest-growing population in the country, they are underrepresented in all areas of higher education: undergraduate, graduate, faculty, and administration. Despite the increasing enrollment of Hispanic students in graduate programs, they only represent a small percentage of full-time academic faculty members. AAHHE recognizes the need to greatly increase the number of Hispanics receiving doctoral degrees, entering higher education on the tenure track, and serving in faculty, administrative, and other leadership roles. AAHHE seeks to recognize and honor doctoral dissertations that exemplify exceptional scholarly research, reflect high academic excellence, and contribute significantly to academic advancement.

ELIGIBILITY

1. The award is open to any Hispanic graduate student who has completed a sole-authored dissertation as part of a doctoral degree program from an accredited postsecondary institution between December 2024 and August 7, 2026.
2. AAHHE accepts award applications from all academic disciplines.
3. Previous AAHHE dissertation award applicants are ineligible to reapply.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES & TIMELINE

The first phase of the application process requires award nominees to submit a complete nomination packet by August 7, 2026. The award submission must include a title page, the dissertation abstract, a dissertation summary that explains the research, and a nomination letter from the dissertation committee chair. Please review the detailed award submission guidelines at www.aahhe.org.

In the second phase, the AAHHE dissertation awards committee will select the top seven to ten award semifinalists. If selected, the semifinalists will be asked to submit their unabridged dissertations. Three finalists will be selected.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The award committee will evaluate the award finalist's dissertation based on the following criteria:

1. The overall quality of the research purpose and aims of the scholarship.
2. The creative and innovative approach to investigate or explore the research topic.
3. The strength of the research methodology or design to conduct the research study.
4. The quality of the discussion of the research dissertation findings.
5. The overall significance of the impact of the research on Hispanic communities.
6. The importance of the dissertation research contributions to advancing knowledge in their respective field.

SELECTION & RECOGNITION

The awards committee will formally recognize the top three finalists at the 22nd Annual AAHHE National Conference scheduled for March 12 - 14, 2027. The three finalists will also receive a monetary award (to be determined), an AAHHE Outstanding Dissertation Award Certificate, and financial support to attend the 2027 AAHHE Conference to present their dissertation in an individual concurrent session. Complete details about the 2027 Outstanding Dissertation Awards are available at www.aahhe.org.

Details about all aspects of the awards are online in the Outstanding Dissertation Awards 2027 Guidelines section at www.aahhe.org.

2026 AWARD WINNERS

FIRST PLACE



Eileen Michelle Gálvez, PhD

Degree Granting Institution: Colorado State University

(In)Visibilities in the U.S. Imperial Academy: Central American Knowledge Outside of Disciplinary Borders

Eileen Michelle Gálvez is a mestiza, U.S. Salvadoreña, born and raised in South Central Los Angeles. She is a scholar-practitioner with over fifteen years of experience in student affairs and higher education administration. Eileen recently completed her Ph.D. in Higher Education from Colorado State University under the advisement of Dra. Susana Muñoz. Her dissertation, *(In)Visibilities in the U.S. Imperial Academy: Central American*

Knowledge Production from Outside of Disciplinary Borders, was funded with the support of the 2024-2025 Education Studies Research Fellow at Yale University. Designed as a study of epistemological resistance to the academy's non-belonging of Central Americans, her dissertation was co-constructed in the accompaniment of five Central American faculty of Black, Indigenous, mestizo, working-class, queer, and gender-queer subjectivities.

SECOND PLACE



Edgar Lopez, PhD

Degree Granting Institution: University of Southern California

Fight, Flight, or Fatigue: Examining How Latino/x Men Develop Validating Mentoring Relationships to Overcome Institutional Racism in Ph.D. Programs

Dr. Edgar Lopez, a first-generation college graduate and son of immigrants from Oaxaca, Mexico, is a mentor to numerous students and supports their pathways to higher education and graduate study. His research focuses on Latina/o/x student success, racial equity in doctoral education, men of color mentoring programs, graduate socialization, and mentoring relationships, with national recognition through presentations at AERA, ASHE, NCORE, and

NASPA. He is a Research Analyst at the Institute for Higher Education Policy, where he supports research analysis and the development of publications, convenings, and presentations on racial and socioeconomic equity, postsecondary data and transparency, college access, affordability, student success, and institutional value.

THIRD PLACE



Ivan Valdovinos Gutierrez, PhD

Degree Granting Institution: University of California San Diego

Transfer Conocimientos: Understanding the Pre-Transfer Experiences of Latina/o/x Community College Students Through a Family-Centered Approach

Dr. Ivan Valdovinos Gutierrez is a scholar-practitioner with over a decade of experience working as a community college administrator with several college access programs, including TRIO Student Support Services, Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement, and the HSI STEM Exitto programs. His research centers on issues of equity, access, and justice in higher education, with a particular focus on how community colleges and

universities transform their organizational structures to foster transfer equity. Ivan received his PhD in Education from the University of California San Diego, a Master of Education Policy and Management from Harvard University, and dual Bachelor of Arts degrees from Washington State University.



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**c/o AAHHE
2455 East Sunrise Boulevard, Suite 816
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304**

**AAHHE is proud to announce the Outstanding
Dissertation Awards 2027.**

**The first deadline is August 7, 2026.
Visit www.aahhe.org for details.**

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