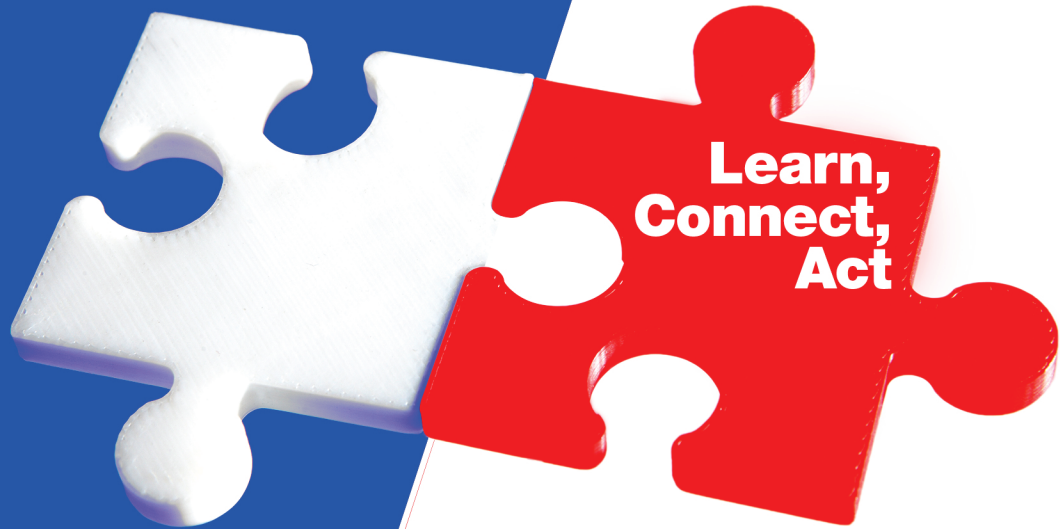


**April 17, 2019**  
**8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.**  
**University of Central Florida**

**Fairwinds Alumni Center**  
**Ballroom, 12676 Gemini Blvd. N.**  
**Orlando, FL 32816**



**Puerto Rico,  
Puerto Ricans:  
In Pursuit of  
Puerto Rican  
Studies  
Research Summit**



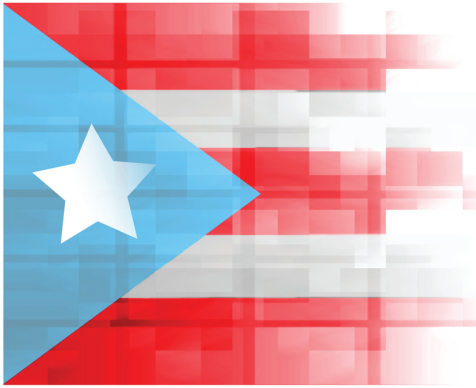
**Puerto Rico  
Research Hub**

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA



**Centro**  
CENTER FOR  
PUERTO RICAN  
STUDIES

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# REBUILD PUERTO RICO

<https://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/events-news/rebuild-puerto-rico>

## Rebuild Puerto Rico

Hurricane Maria, a devastating Category 4 hurricane, caused thousands of deaths, injuries and illnesses and resulted in billions of dollars in damages to Puerto Rico and left 3.4 million island residents without power, potable water, and telecommunications. Recovery is estimated to take years. Centro has launched Rebuild Puerto Rico, an online information clearinghouse for the stateside Puerto Rican community and other allies to support disaster relief and recovery efforts. Rebuild Puerto Rico is also being transformed into a data hub and research mechanism to inform public policy and community engagement for rebuilding Puerto Rico.

Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico at a time of great financial difficulty for the island and its residents, leaving behind widespread destruction and a humanitarian crisis. Stay up to date with recent events related to recovery and reconstruction efforts in Puerto Rico.

News

You can help by donating directly to charities in Puerto Rico that are leading the effort to mitigate the humanitarian crisis. The website contains a list of charities and local initiatives with direct access to the victims of these hurricanes.

Donate

Browse current volunteer opportunities in support of disaster relief and recovery and reconstruction efforts.

Volunteer

Puerto Rican community leaders and elected officials in the diaspora are calling for a renewed effort to assist Puerto Rico with disaster relief and recovery. Many have responded to this call to action and have planned events in support of relief efforts.

Events

This natural disaster will undoubtedly dictate the upcoming policy agenda for the island. It is imperative that we maintain public awareness for disaster relief efforts and engagement, not just in the emergency phase but also during recovery and reconstruction.

Policy

Several federal, state, local, and private sector programs are available for those affected by a natural disaster. This page contains a collection of important resources and agencies that can help you during this difficult time.

Need Help?

Connect with people and organizations that provide a service or work with the Puerto Rican community stateside and in Puerto Rico.

Directory

Through two interactive maps find information related to pre and post-Maria conditions in Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican solidarity movement in the United States.

Data Hub

Find information about collaboration opportunities or request for support from organizations that are working on the rebuilding of Puerto Rico.

Exchange

**The Puerto Rico Research Hub of the University of Central Florida and the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College-CUNY welcome you to the Puerto Rico, Puerto Ricans: In Pursuit of Puerto Rican Studies Research Summit. This summit looks to establish a strategic direction for research specifically for Puerto Ricans in Florida, and more generally for Puerto Rican Studies as a field. The goal is to mobilize Puerto Rican researchers around an agenda that sets priorities from a Puerto Rican community perspective and is relevant to a broad range of stakeholders. It further seeks to advance the implementation of a vision for promoting the understanding of post Hurricane Maria social conditions of stateside Puerto Ricans, and fostering positive social change among the processes and institutions that affect the welfare of our community.**

The Puerto Rico, Puerto Ricans: In Pursuit of Puerto Rican Studies Research Summit will be using a search conference format. What is it? It's convening participants with the objective of identifying a shared vision of the future towards which to aim. In essence, the search conference is simply a structured discussion about topics of interest to a target group, with the goal of making recommendations for collective action. In our case, it is simply a "structured search" for a research agenda that leads to and supports community action for social change. Our goal is to mobilize Puerto Rican researchers around an agenda that sets priorities from a Puerto Rican community perspective and is relevant to a broad range of stakeholders.

## **Key Questions for panel discussions:**

### **What do we know?**

Identify three to four critical issues needing targeted research.

### **What can we do?**

Assess the opportunities for affecting social change and the potential for research to have an impact on the definition and understanding of the problem.

### **Who is going to do it?**

Discussion will help:

1. To produce an inventory of resources that can be deployed to collaborate on projects that would result in relevant research;
2. The use of research findings by stakeholders; and
3. Track discernable impact in social outcomes.

In this context, the availability and identification of researchers willing and able to undertake the proposed research is essential. It is equally important that we seek to identify potential partners for structuring collaborations, or working groups, which could then become a catalyst for the implementation of the group recommendations.

NEW FROM CENTRO PRESS

# CENTRO

Journal of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies

VOL. 30, NUMBER III, 2018

## Puerto Rico Post-Hurricane Maria: Origins and Consequences of a Crisis

Guest editors:

Edwin Meléndez and Charles R. Venator-Santiago



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The Politics of PROMESA

**Edwin Meléndez**

The Economics of PROMESA

**Edwin Meléndez**

An Analysis of Puerto Rico's Debt Relief Needs to Restore Debt Sustainability

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Energy Policies in Puerto Rico and their Impact on the Likelihood of a Resilient and Sustainable Electric Power Infrastructure

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**Charles R. Venator-Santiago**

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# Program

## 8:00 a.m. Registration

### 8:40 a.m. Welcoming Remarks

**Michael Johnson**, Dean of the College of Sciences, College of Sciences, UCF

**Teresa Rodríguez**, Coordinator, Puerto Rico Research HUB

**Carlos Vargas-Ramos**, Master of ceremonies

### 9:00 a.m. Introductory Remarks

**Fernando I. Rivera**, Director, Puerto Rico Research Hub & Associate Professor, Department of Sociology; Interim Assistant Vice Provost for Faculty Excellence, UCF

**Edwin Meléndez**, Director, Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Professor of Urban Policy and Planning, Hunter College, City University of New York (CUNY)

### 10:00 a.m. Plenary: Puerto Ricans in Florida

**Eduardo A. Gamarra**, Professor of Political Science, Department of Politics and International Relations, Florida International University

**Johanna López**, School Board Member, Orange County School Board, Orlando, FL

**Anthony Suárez**, Immediate Past President, Puerto Rican Bar Association of Orlando, FL

**Moderator: Luis Martínez-Fernández**, Professor of History, College of Arts & Humanities, UCF

### 11:15 a.m. Break

### 11:30 a.m. Concurrent Panels

#### MIGRATION TO CENTRAL FLORIDA- ROOM A

**Yanidsi Veléz-Bonet**, Florida Senior State Director, Hispanic Federation

**Jennifer Hinojosa**, Research Associate & Data Center Coordinator, Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College, CUNY

**Alessandra Rosa**, Postdoctoral Scholar, Department of Sociology, University of South Florida

**Moderator: Jeffery J. Hayward**, President & CEO, Heart of Florida United Way, Orlando

#### DISASTER RESPONSE AND RECOVERY - ROOM B

**Manuel Soto**, Emergency Manager, City of Orlando Office of Emergency Management (OEM), FL

**Christopher Emrich**, Endowed Associate Professor of Environmental Science and Public Administration, & founding member of the National Center for Integrated Coastal Research, UCF

**Martha Kohen**, Director, Center for Hydro-generated Urbanism, University of Florida

**Moderator: Luis E. Santiago**, Associate professor & Director of the Urban and Regional Planning Program, College of Community Innovation and Education, UCF

#### HEALTH - ROOM C

**Howard Rodríguez-Mori**, Assistant Professor, College of Communication & Information, Florida State University

**Josephine Mercado**, Founder & Executive Director, Hispanic Health Initiatives, Inc., FL

**Eida M. Castro-Figueroa**, Associate Professor, Ponce Health Sciences University, School of Medicine and School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences, PR

**Moderator: Marucci Guzmán**, Executive Director, Latino Leadership, FL

### 12:45 p.m. Lunch

### 1:45 p.m. Concurrent Panels

#### ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY - ROOM A

**José Luis Rivera Villamañán**, Orlando Area President, Florida Hispanic American Chamber of Commerce

**Gaby Ortigoni**, President, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metro Orlando, FL

**Katia Medina**, Senior Business Development Consultant, Central Florida, Prospera

**Moderator: Margie E. Viera**, Puerto Rico Business Harbor

#### ACADEMIC RESEARCH AFTER MARIA - ROOM B

**Vanessa M. Pérez**, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Queens College, CUNY

**Ramón Borges-Méndez**, Associate Professor, Community Development & Planning Program, International Development, Community & Environment Dept., Clark University, MA

**Ivis García-Zambrana**, Assistant Professor of City & Metropolitan Planning, University of Utah

**Moderator: Carlos Vargas-Ramos**, Director of Public Policy, Development, Media and External Relations, Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College, CUNY

#### CIVIC SECTOR ENGAGEMENT IN RECOVERY - ROOM C

**Rev. Heriberto Martínez**, Director, Sociedad Bíblica de Puerto Rico

**José Israel Cruz**, Frederick Douglass Distinguished Scholar, American University

**Luisa R. Seijo Maldonado**, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez, PR

**Moderator: Melina Olmo**, Consultant, Economic Development

### 3:00 p.m. Break

**3:30 p.m. Closing Plenary:** Where do we go from here? Reports from breakout sessions

**5:15 p.m. Reception:** Puerto Rico Research Hub, 12815 Scholarship Drive, Barbara Ying Center Building (#71), University of Central Florida



# The Puerto Rico Research Hub

For years Puerto Ricans have moved to Florida, in addition to other parts of the continental United States, and contributed to its economic and social well-being. The population movement accelerated after Hurricane Maria hit the small island in September 2017. People began arriving in Tampa, Orlando, Ft. Lauderdale and Miami seeking relief from the destruction of Hurricane Maria and the island’s ongoing financial crisis. In response to these demographic trends, UCF created the Puerto Rico Research Hub with the purpose of investigating, disseminating knowledge and promoting creative solutions to pressing issues affecting the Puerto Rican population, its diaspora and surrounding communities.

## Mission

The UCF Puerto Rico Research Hub exists to investigate the Puerto Rican population and demographic trends to better inform public policy decisions impacting housing demands, job creation,

health issues, social integration and education. Additional areas of emphasis include bilingual training, disaster response and recovery, and partnerships in the community.

## UCF Demographics

UCF is a Hispanic Serving Institution as listed by the Department of Education with 26.3% of the student population identifying as Hispanic/Latino.

- 30% of first-generation students at UCF identify as Puerto Rican
- UCF ranks sixth in the nation for bachelor’s degrees awarded to Hispanic students

## Purpose

The UCF Puerto Rico Research Hub strives to aggregate efforts and resources, integrate faculty-led research and to provide actionable data outcomes to enable society to provide better resources to the Puerto Rican community.

## Demographics of Puerto Ricans in Florida

Florida is now home to more than one million Puerto Ricans. One out of every five Latinos in Florida is Puerto Rican, and the Orlando metropolitan area is one of the most concentrated regions with residents that identify as Puerto Rican. The estimates of the post-Hurricane Maria migration indicate Florida as the most likely destination for Puerto Ricans leaving the island.

The Puerto Rico Research Hub supports UCF's mission as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) by providing a center of intellectual inquiry and programming to enhance the needs of the community, students and faculty. Affiliated faculty seek to create and enhance academic courses and curriculum related to Puerto Rican issues. The Hub is an essential component of fulfilling our responsibility as a public metropolitan research university.

## Partnerships

A key element in our approach is to develop partnerships with academic and community organizations in Florida, Puerto Rico and the nation. Partnerships with organizations interested in the economic, environmental and human well-being of the island, its people and the Puerto Rican diaspora on the mainland. Since the founding of the Hub in 2018, evolving partnerships include:

- Florida Hispanic American Chamber of Commerce
- Cuban Research Institute (CRI) at Florida International University
- Institute for the Study of Latin American and the Caribbean (ISLAC) at University of South Florida
- Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College
- Instituto Nacional de Energía y Sostenibilidad Isleña (INESI) at the University of Puerto Rico

## Research in Action

Starting in January 2019, the Puerto Rico Research Hub will be located in the UCF Global Barbara Ying Center. With space to grow, goals for expansion through private funding include securing support for:

- Community Workshops
- Creation of educational materials
- Social media platform communication
- Undergraduate student workers
- Graduate research assistants
- Aggregated community resource website
- Research outcome reports
- Statewide conference on Puerto Ricans in Florida



**Fernando Rivera, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor  
Sociology  
University of Central Florida

## Dr. Fernando Rivera, Ph.D.

UCF Sociology Associate Professor, and founding director of the Puerto Rico Research Hub, Fernando Rivera, Ph.D., is already leading the way with work in the fields of medical sociology/sociology of health, race and ethnicity and the sociology of disasters. Rivera has been studying the movement of Puerto Ricans to the Central Florida community for over 10 years. He has studied the differential patterns of health among Puerto Ricans in the U.S. by analyzing different social indicators such as: perceived discrimination, residential segregation and socioeconomic status and their impact on Puerto Rican health.

In the area of race and ethnicity, he has studied racial relations among college students, the process of incorporation of Puerto Ricans to Central Florida, and several aspects of the Puerto Rican diaspora in the US including health disparities, culture, and discrimination, among others. For the study of disasters, his work has emphasized disaster resiliency and the importance of social and economic indicators in promoting resilience to the process of preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery to disasters.

A native of Puerto Rico, he continues to be involved in issues affecting the Puerto Rican community and he is recognized as one of the leading voices with regards to Puerto Rico in Central Florida.

## For More Information

### Please Visit:

[Sciences.ucf.edu/Puerto-rico-hub](https://sciences.ucf.edu/Puerto-rico-hub)

## To Give to the Program

### Contact:

Kathryn Matta  
Associate Director of Development  
UCF Foundation  
(407) 823-3684  
[Kathryn.Matta@ucf.edu](mailto:Kathryn.Matta@ucf.edu)

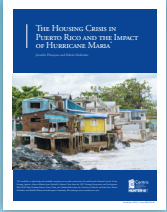


## Puerto Rico One Year After Hurricane Maria

September 20, 2018 marked a year since hurricane Maria wrought havoc on the Island of Puerto Rico. Though the media has reported the crisis in a myriad of ways—for better or worse—our intention here is to provide a timeline of the major occurrences in the aftermath, a meta-analysis of the media’s coverage of the disaster, and an updated account of the exodus of people.

<https://goo.gl/6JeJro>

<https://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/research/data-center/research-briefs/puerto-rico-one-year-after-hurricane-maria>



## The Housing Crisis in Puerto Rico and the Impact of Hurricane Maria

By all counts, Puerto Rico’s housing market is in a deep and prolonged crisis. At least 18 percent of Puerto Rico’s housing stock is vacant as a result of the island’s prolonged economic recession. This report examines the housing crisis which commenced in 2006, and how the spike in foreclosures after Hurricane Maria suggests that vacant units are increasing at an accelerated rate.

<https://goo.gl/eTZG2Y>

<https://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/research/data-center/research-briefs/housing-crisis-puerto-rico-and-impact-hurricane-maria>



## Puerto Rico in Crisis Timeline

Since 2006 Puerto Rico has been facing an unprecedented economic and fiscal crisis that shows little signs of ending or abating in the foreseeable future. In this timeline, we summarize the most important milestones and turning points since 1898, and the impacts that United States and local policies have had on Puerto Rico’s Economy.

<https://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/education/puerto-rico-crisis-timeline>



## Rebuild Puerto Rico: A Guide to Federal Policy and Advocacy

The impact of Hurricane Maria will be felt for decades, and long-term recovery and rebuilding efforts in Puerto Rico are expected to take years. This report provides an overview of federal disaster relief policy, dissects the recovery process and the role of federal assistance, and discusses possible entry points for advocacy efforts.

<https://goo.gl/7rKUa9>

<https://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/events-news/rebuild-puerto-rico/policy/rebuild-puerto-rico-guide-federal-policy-and-advocacy>



## Celebrating 45 Years of Achievements

The Center for Puerto Rican Studies (Centro) has grown considerably over the past forty-five years, fine-tuning our research, archives, pedagogy, and programming so as to evolve with the times. This guide provides an overview of the history and achievements of Centro since its founding in 1973, and a summary of the programs and educational tools available to the public.

<https://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/centrovoices/current-affairs/celebrating-45-years-guide-centro>

The Center for Puerto Rican Studies (Centro) is the nation’s leading university-based institution devoted to the interdisciplinary study of the Puerto Rican experience in the United States. Centro is dedicated to understanding, preserving and sharing the Puerto Rican experience in the United States. Centro invites Centro Voices contributors to make use of the extensive archival, bibliographic and research material preserved in its Library and Archives.

The Centro Library and Archives is devoted to collecting, preserving and providing access to resources documenting the history and culture of Puerto Ricans. The Centro Library and Archives was established in 1973 as a component of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies. The collections include books, current and historic newspapers and periodicals, audio, film & video, manuscripts, photographs, art prints, and recorded music. The Library and Archives provides services and programs to the scholarly community as well as the general public. Constituents are diverse and come from the United States and abroad. The Library and Archives facilitates access to information on its holdings through the City University’s online public catalog or CUNY+. It also provides research and information assistance via phone and email.

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# Bios and Contact Information

**Ramón Borges-Méndez, Associate Professor of Community Development & Planning, Clark University, International Development, Community and Environment Dept. (IDCE), 950 Main Street Worcester, MA 01610, (508) 421-3838, rborgesmendez@clarku.edu**

Borges-Méndez is currently coordinator of the graduate Community Development and Planning Program, and co-coordinator of the dual degree (MA/MBA) program at Clark University (Worcester, MA). He holds a PhD and an MCP in Urban/City and Regional Planning from MIT, and a BA in Social Thought and Political Economy (STPEC) from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He also has a broad career as a consultant working for the Ford Foundation, the World Bank, The Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations (ECLAC), The United Nations' Department for Social and Economic Affairs, the Inter-American Development Bank, The Brookings Institution, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency, the Government of Chile, and SEIU-1199 Health Care Workers, NYC.

**Eida M. Castro-Figueroa, Associate Professor, Ponce Health Sciences University, School of Medicine and School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences, PO BOX 7004, Ponce, PR 00732-7004, (787) 840-2575, ecastro@psm.edu**

Castro-Figueroa holds a Psychology Doctorate in Clinical Psychology and a Post-Doctoral Master degree in Clinical and Translational Research. Currently, she is an Associate Professor at Ponce Health Sciences University (PHSU), Puerto Rico. She has obtained a joint position at PHSU's School of Medicine (SOM) and School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences (SBBS). Under her current faculty position, she devotes 65% of her time to leading and co-leading trans-disciplinary population health research projects. Moreover, she has experience providing service to the community by partnering with local community-based organizations that provide psychosocial care to cancer patients/survivors.

**José Israel Cruz, Frederick Douglass Distinguished Scholar, American University, israel.jose.pr@gmail.com**

Cruz is a Class of 2019 Frederick Douglass Distinguished Scholar at American University majoring in Chemistry minoring in Sustainability. He hopes to foster and build Puerto Rico's green economy through Research & Development in Materials Science and Energy, using the power of business and local governance to simultaneously bring economic progress and dramatically change how Puerto Rico's urban communities impact their natural environment. Selected to participate in Aspen Institute Latinos and Society Program Conversation with Justice Sonia Sotomayor March 2017

**Christopher Emrich, Endowed Associate Professor of Environmental Science and Public Administration, & founding member of the National Center for Integrated Coastal Research, University of Central Florida 407-823-5847, Christopher.Emrich@ucf.edu**

Emrich's research interests include the application of geospatial web-based technologies to emergency management planning and practice, long term recovery from disaster, and the intersection of social vulnerability and community resilience in the face of disaster. Emrich has been actively involved in identifying trends in long term recovery for coastal Mississippi and supervising FEMA's public assistance web-transparency initiative for the gulf coast. He is a strong advocate of the transition of knowledge from academia and research into real-world applications.

**Eduardo A. Gamarra, Professor of Political Science, Department of Politics and International Relations, Florida International University, Modesto A. Maidique SIPA Building, Room 410, 11200 SW 8th Street Miami, FL 33199, (305) 348-1718, gamarrae@fiu.edu**

Gamarra is a tenured full professor of political science in the department of politics and international relations at Florida International University. He has been at FIU since 1986 where he also directed the Latin American and Caribbean Center (LACC) from 1994 to 2007. As director of LACC, Gamarra was involved in research and public policy issues, academic exchanges, fund raising, and other multiple activities in most countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. In February 2016 he was appointed founding director of the Latino Public Opinion Forum at the Stephen Green School of International and Public Affairs.

**Ivis García-Zambrana, Assistant Professor of City & Metropolitan Planning, University of Utah, 375 South 1530 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84112, UT 84112, (801)585-9725, ivis.garcia@utah.edu**

García was recently elected a board member of the National Puerto Rican Agenda, which is a nonpartisan alliance to address Puerto Rico's humanitarian crisis and promote Puerto Rican political and civic participation in the United States. She also chairs Planners for Puerto Rico, a group of academics and practitioner's planners from ACS, APA, FEMA, CENTRO, UPR, and Society for Puerto Rican Planners among other, collaborating in recovery efforts for Puerto Rico.

**Mariucci Guzman, Executive Director, Latino Leadership, 8617 E. Colonial Drive, Suites 1600, Orlando, FL 32817, (407) 895-0801, (407) 895-0801 x 103, marucci@latino-leadership.org**

Marucci attained a Master of Management and Public Administration from the University of Phoenix of Orlando, Florida and B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies with a focus on Political Science and Non-Profit Management from the University of Central Florida. In response to Hurricane Maria ravaging the Island of Puerto Rico, she created the Puerto Rico Family Response Center which has served more than 9,100 displaced families through emergency response and programmatic services. LLBH serves the Central Florida community through linguistically- and culturally-relevant mental health services.

**Jeff Hayward, President & CEO, Heart of Florida United Way, 1940 Traylor Blvd, Orlando, FL 32804, (407) 835-0900, hfuwcontact@hfuw.org**

As president & CEO of Heart of Florida United Way, Jeff brings a unique background in politics, public and private sector leadership. After serving in the Massachusetts House of Representatives and VP of development/marketing for a national, publicly traded health care company, he joined United Way of Massachusetts Bay. As chief of external affairs, he led the annual strategic investment of nearly \$35 million in community initiatives and agencies. With over 18 years of experience with United Way, he lends his non-profit expertise to Central Florida by serving on the board and executive committee of Central Florida Commission on Homelessness and the Career-Source Central Florida board.

**Jennifer Hinojosa, Research Associate & Data Center Coordinator, Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College, City University of New York, (212) 396-6335, jhinojos@hunter.cuny.edu**

Hinojosa received her Master of Science degree in Geographical Science from University of Maryland, College Park in 2016, and interned at the Brookings Institution's Metropolitan Policy Program in Washington D.C. Her research interests include GIS, socioeconomic disparities, migration, and demography.

**Martha Kohen, Director, Center for Hydro-generated Urbanism, University of Florida 352-294-1475, (352) 294-1475, mkohen@ufl.edu**

Kohen was born in Uruguay immigrant European parents. She studied Architecture at the Universidad de la República and Cambridge University. From 2003 to 2008, she served as Director the School of Architecture at the University of Florida, where she currently teaches, conducts Research and directs the UF Center for Hydro-generated Urbanism. The UF Center for Hydro-generated Urbanism (CHU) proposes new paradigms for the evolution of water-based settlements. From retrofitting the metropolis to envisioning future development on the water.

**Johanna López, School Board Member, Orange County School Board, P.O. Box 271, Orlando, FL 32802, 407-317-3236 Johanna.Lopez@ocps.net**

Johanna López was elected to represent District 2 on the Orange County School Board in 2018 after her campaign was fully run by current and former OCPS students. A native of Puerto Rico, Ms. López earned her Bachelor of Arts in Hispanic Studies from the University of Puerto Rico and holds a Master of Arts in Higher Education from the Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico. Before joining the school board, she served as an Advanced Placement Spanish Teacher at Colonial High for 19 years (1999-2018).

**Rev. Heriberto Martínez, Chairman, Sociedad Bíblica de Puerto Rico, 627 Av. Andalucía, San Juan, 00920, sociedadbiblicapr@bibliapr.com**

Rev. Martínez Rivera is Chairman of the Bible Society of Puerto Rico and Coordinator of the Ecumenical Coalition of Puerto Rico and of the Ecumenical Jubilee Coalition of Puerto Rico. The Bible Society of Puerto Rico has actively participated in recovery activities after Hurricane Maria, including trainings of treatments for the healing of the trauma. He has also coordinated with the religious leaders of the island who are calling for a "jubilee" on the current debt of the island and the censorship of austerity policies. Reverend Martínez Rivera is also the Coordinator of IDEAComun.

**Luis Martínez-Fernández, Professor of History, College of Arts & Humanities, University of Central Florida, (407) 823-1169 Luis.MartinezFernandez@ucf.edu**

Martínez-Fernández is a historian, university professor, author and public speaker, whose fields of expertise include Latin America, the Caribbean, education, and Latino / Hispanic politics, culture, and society. Born in Havana, Cuba and raised in Lima, Peru and San Juan, Puerto Rico, he holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in History from the University of Puerto Rico and a Ph.D. in History from Duke University. His publications include articles in Cuban Studies, Slavery and Abolition, Latin American Research Review, The Americas, Caribbean Studies, History Today, and in numerous anthologies and edited volumes.

**Katia Medina, Senior Business Consultant, Prospera, 3201 East Colonial Drive, Suite A20, Orlando FL 32803, (888) PROSPERA, admin@prosperausa.org**

Since 2014, Medina has provided business consulting to Hispanic entrepreneurs from within the state, Puerto Rico and a variety of Spanish-speaking countries to help them establish or expand businesses in Central Florida. In her role as business consultant, she advises entrepreneurs individually on how to effectively start and operate their business in the country and local region. This includes identifying needs and opportunities, assessing the feasibility of new ideas, serving as liaison for additional professional services, and facilitating access to financing from various lenders.

**Edwin Meléndez, Director, Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Professor of Urban Policy and Planning, Hunter College, City University of New York, (212) 772-5695, edwin.melendez@hunter.cuny.edu**

Meléndez is a Professor of Urban Policy and Planning at Hunter College and the Director of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies. He has conducted considerable research in the areas of Puerto Rican and Latino studies, economic development, labor markets, and poverty. In addition to numerous scientific papers and other publications, he is the author or editor of thirteen books including State of Puerto Ricans 2017 (Centro Press), Puerto Ricans at the Dawn of the New Millennium (Centro Press, 2014) and Latinos in a Changing Society (Praeger, 2007).

**Josephine Mercado, Founder & Executive Director, Hispanic Health Initiatives, Inc., 70 Spring Vista Dr. #2, Debary, FL 32713, (386) 320-0110**

Mercado was an attorney in New York City for 17 years. There, she founded two health and education initiatives: Judges and Lawyers Breast Cancer Alert and First Saturday In October, which focused on breast health education and awareness among New York City Latinas. In 2000, she founded the Hispanic Health Initiatives (HHI) to bridge the disconnect between health providers and the underserved Latino community of central Florida, through culturally sensitive and linguistically responsive healthcare.

**Melina Olmo, Consultant, Economic Development**

With over fifteen years of experience in the sphere of strategy and program development, Melina has worked with international and domestic organizations, providing support to leaders by offering policy research, project management and technical knowhow on implementing successful strategies. Using a wide range of capacity-building techniques, Melina guides clients to develop relevant approaches from project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation to all partners involved in the project. Her passionate hands-on involvement with organizations ensures that the project succeeds to the satisfaction of all stakeholders involved.

**Gaby Ortigoni, President, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metro Orlando, 3201 E Colonial Dr, Orlando, FL 32803, (407) 428-5870, info@hispanic-chamber.net**

As the President of HCCMO, her duty is to ensure that the Chamber fulfills its responsibilities to its members. Throughout her professional career, Ortigoni has been strongly committed to business development, strategic relationship building, economic development, international business, government affairs, and comprehensive community development. Ortigoni has received numerous awards, including the Orlando Business Journal's 40 Under 40 Award & Women Who Mean Business, Hispanic Women Who Make the Difference Award from La Prensa, Orange County Sheriff's Office Community Service Award, and the Orlando Police Department's Good Citizenship Award, among others.

**Vanessa M. Pérez, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Queens College, City University of New York (Vanessa.Perez@qc.cuny.edu)**

Perez specializes in American politics, with a focus on electoral institutions, campaigns, race and ethnicity, political behavior, health care policy, and research methods. Dr. Perez holds a PhD, MPhil, and BA in Political Science from Columbia University.

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Rivera serves as the founding Director of the Puerto Rico Research Hub. He has studied the movement of Puerto Ricans to the Central Florida community for over 10 years and has studied the differential patterns of health among Puerto Ricans in the United States by analyzing different social indicators such as: perceived discrimination, residential segregation and socioeconomic status and their impact on Puerto Rican health.

**José Luis Rivera Villamañán, Orlando Area President, Florida Hispanic American Chamber of Commerce Info@hispanicchamber.org**

Rivera-Villamañán graduated from Kansas State University with a BBA in Marketing & Economics, and then attended University of Phoenix MBA program. His work background includes hotels & shopping centers development consulting, advertising, market, Sales & Strategic Planning, working at the multinationals, PR, promotional, radio & TV production, marketing, media and video marketing plans. Now, more recently, José Luis founded SCL & Grand International Productions working clients in the state of Florida, US at large and the Caribbean.

**Howard Rodríguez-Mori, Assistant Professor, College of Communication & Information, Florida State University, 4100 University Center, Building C Tallahassee, FL 32306-2651, (850) 644-9698, hmori@fsu.edu**

Rodríguez-Mori is a researcher on the influence of interpersonal, social, ethnic and cultural factors on information-seeking behavior. He has been on the faculty of Simmons College since 2008 and he has served as an adjunct faculty member at FSU, the University of Arizona, the University of Denver and Wayne State University. He is an experienced public librarian (Orlando Public Library, Florida, and the Arapahoe Library District, Colorado) and academic librarian (UA and FSU Libraries) in the areas of diversity, reference and outreach.

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A native New Yorker of Puerto Rican descent, she has a Bachelors degree in Spanish, with a minor in Anthropology from Brooklyn College, City University of New York. She has been a part of UCF since 2014. She serves to establish, maintain, and expand, the Hub's community efforts in addition to determining synergies within UCF entities, supporting the unit's operational functions, and provide student support wherever possible. She is also a part of the UCF Global department working on special projects such as the Latin American-Caribbean (LAC) Scholarship initiative and community outreach assignments.

**Alessandra Rosa, Postdoctoral Scholar, Department of Sociology, University of South Florida, 4202 E Fowler Ave CPR107, Tampa, FL 33620, (813)974 -2893, aless12@gmail.com**

Rosa is a sociocultural anthropologist, professor, researcher, activist, public speaker, and consultant. Currently, she is a postdoctoral scholar in the Department of Sociology at University of South Florida (USF). Her areas of expertise include social movements, education, media, spaces of resistance, and discourses with a focus on student activism and Internet activism.

**Luis E. Santiago, Associate Professor & Director of the Urban and Regional Planning Program, College of Community Innovation and Education, University of Central Florida, 12494 University Blvd., Orlando, FL 32816, Luis.santiago2@ucf.edu**

Santiago served as professor at the University of Puerto Rico Graduate School of Planning. Dr. Santiago holds a doctoral degree in city and regional planning from Cornell University. His interest in the role of ecosystem services in Planning has led him to participate as Co-PI in the NASA Puerto Rico Human Impacts of Coastal Ecosystems and the NSF San Juan Urban Long-Term Research Area-Exploratory projects.

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Seijo Maldonado's research interests include communities, gender issues, violence against women. Serving as an editorial member and reviewer of several international reputed journals, Dr. Luisa R. Seijo Maldonado is also the member of many international affiliations.

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Soto received his Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education and Social Science from Inter-American University of Puerto Rico and a Master of Public Administration degree from Troy State University in Alabama. Prior to becoming the Emergency Manager for the City of Orlando, Manuel worked as an Emergency Management Planner for two years with Orange County. He served 20 years in the U.S. Army active and reserves component. He was an Infantry Officer and a Communications Officer in the U.S. Army. During his various worldwide deployments, he specialized in tactical command and control communication systems and emergency contingency planning.

**Anthony Suárez, Immediate Past President, Puerto Rican Bar Association of Orlando, 517 West Colonial Drive, Orlando, Florida 32804, (407) 841-7073, suarez@cfl.rr.com**

Born in New York City of parents from Puerto Rico, was admitted to the Bar in 1977 in New York and in 1992 in Florida. Mr. Suarez has had a varied career, as a trial attorney, counsel to New York State Legislature, community activist, Member of the Florida state Legislature, United States Delegate to the Guatemala Peace Accords in 1996, currently adjunct Professor of Law and Radio talk show host. He has tried hundreds of jury trials and argued dozens of cases before appellate courts thus he has had a wide experience in the law over the 31 years of practice.

**Julie Torres, Scholar-in-Residence, Puerto Rico Research Hub, 12815 Scholarship Drive, Barbara Ying Center Building (#71) +0130, Orlando, FL 32816, (407) 823-6235, PRResearchHub@ucf.edu**

Torres is a Ph.D. candidate in Sociocultural Anthropology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her dissertation research foregrounds Puerto Rican women's activism in Orlando, Florida in light of recent events, such as the economic crisis in Puerto Rico, the shooting at Pulse nightclub, the 2016 elections, and the devastation of Hurricane Maria. Her research interests include diaspora, Puerto Rican and Latinx Studies, activism, gender, race, colonial and postcolonial studies. She has an M.A. in Anthropology and Education from Teachers College, Columbia University (2012) and a B.A. in English from Villanova University (2006).

**Carlos Vargas-Ramos, Director of Public Policy, Development, Media and External Relations, Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College, City University of New York cvargasr@hunter.cuny.edu**

Vargas-Ramos is a Research Associate at the Center for Puerto Rican Studies (Hunter College-CUNY), where he works on the impact of migration on Puerto Rican political behavior, political attitudes and orientations, as well as on issues of racial identity. He received his B.A. in Political Science and Economics from Rutgers University. He also holds an M.A. in Hispanic Civilization from New York University, and a Ph.D. in Political Science from Columbia University.

**Margie E. Viera, Puerto Rico Business Harbor**

Viera is the Development Director at the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metro Orlando and is the Co-Founder of the Aspire to Inspire Youth Mentorship Program which impacts underserved students to INSPIRE them to become the next generation of leaders. Margie E. Viera has a diverse career with over 15 years of experience in marketing and developing companies in several industries. This includes Higher Education (For-Profit & Non-Profits), International Commercial Import & Export, Personal Development and Corporate (Fortune 500) Consulting.

**Yanidsi Velez, Hispanic Federation Florida State Senior Director Policy, Programs and Operations**

Born and raised in Puerto Rico. Moved to Florida in 2006. A seasoned non profit administrator and issues base advocate. Has worked for the top three most prestigious National Latino Organizations (National Council of La Raza, National Latino Elected Officials and Hispanic Federation). Founder of Hispanos Al Dia and Board member of several Economic Empowerment initiatives. Has been recognized for her professionalism, outstanding representation of our community and mentorship to young professionals. B.A Communications and Public Relations, Sacred Heart University, Santurce PR. Post Graduate: Non Profit, Policy and Philanthropy Studies and Family Counseling. Highlight: Proud foster and adoptive mother of two precious Puerto Rican children.

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