

Luis R. Torres-Hostos, PhD

Brief Bio

Luis R. Torres-Hostos, Ph.D., is Founding Dean and Professor of the School of Social Work at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley in Edinburg, TX. Since taking on this role a year ago, he has worked to integrate the School of Social Work into the university, local, and binational communities of the Rio Grande Valley (RGV). He is positioning the School of Social Work to play a key role in promoting health, health equity, and social justice. Under his leadership, the School of Social Work is increasing the number of faculty and researchers; expanding community-engaged research and scholarship in areas impacting the RGV communities; and strengthening educational initiatives like expanding clinical preparation in the master's program, developing additional specializations, creating a bilingual master's program, and building a doctoral program. Dr. Torres-Hostos' research focuses on health inequities and social determinants of health with a focus on Hispanic and African American communities. He also works on community engagement initiatives aimed at building community resilience. He is currently leading a team of researchers, community partners, and students in an NIH-funded project titled *Community Engagement Strategies for COVID-19 Prevention and Response in Underserved Communities in Hidalgo County*, which is part of the Texas CEAL (Community-Engagement Research Alliance Against COVID-19 in Disproportionately Affected Communities) Consortium (see www.TexasCeal.org). Dr. Torres-Hostos' research and community work have been funded by federal, state, and private entities. He has traveled and worked extensively in Latin America, and has established research collaborations in Mexico, Central America, and Puerto Rico. Prior to coming to The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Dr. Torres was at the University of Houston, where he served as Associate Dean for Research and Strategic Partnerships in the Graduate College of Social Work, Director of the Center for Drug and Social Policy Research, and Humana Endowed Chair in the Social Determinants of Health, a joint appointment with the College of Medicine and the Humana Integrated Health System Sciences Institute. He served as President of the Board of Directors of Avenue 360 Health and Wellness, one of Houston's largest Federally Qualified Healthcare Centers, and on the board of the Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans. Dr. Torres-Hostos currently serves on the Board of Directors of the American Red Cross South Texas Chapter and is a member of the Rotary Club of Mission. Originally from Puerto Rico, Dr. Torres-Hostos holds a doctorate in clinical psychology from Fordham University in New York City and has over 30 years of clinical, teaching, research, and administrative experience.