

A vibrant graphic for Hispanic Heritage Month. It features a central orange circle with a scalloped blue border and a dotted black inner border. Inside the circle, the words "HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH" are written in bold, black, serif capital letters. Above the text is a stylized floral motif. The background is black, adorned with various colorful flowers (red, yellow, blue, purple, orange) and green leaves, along with small colored dots.

**HISPANIC  
HERITAGE  
MONTH**

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH 2022

In celebration of our  
diverse community



## FATIMA SALAS



Fatima is the **Senior Education Manager** for the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Her role entails management of our Graduate Medical Education programs, supporting the Medical Student Clerkship, Residency, and Fellowship Coordinators, as well as our faculty and learners. Fatima is the 2022 recipient of the Hispanic Leadership Program, offered by Portland's Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

**Length at OHSU:** 3 years

### **What things do you love about your culture and your family?**

Honestly, before I got to Portland, I never really thought about my culture. Having moved from Los Angeles to Portland and being around so few Latinos, I realized how much I missed cultural celebrations that I had taken for granted. Now, I am making a bigger investment in celebrating my culture

for my kids. I like decorating my house to celebrate cultural holidays, music, dancing, and food. Both my husband and I inherited the drive from our parents to not settle and work hard. What I love about my culture is the emphasis on family but also the mission to help and uplift others.

### **What advice (personal or professional) would you give to others of Hispanic heritage?**

As a first-generation college student, higher education was all brand new for my family and I. We were all learning and did not know networking was half of getting a job. When I graduated, my education was great but I had no work experience and no network. If I had known earlier, I would have made an investment in getting to know people who have access and help you get your foot in the door. I would advise taking advantage of networking events and meeting new people. This is also an opportunity to see how you can contribute to other people's success.

### **What is your favorite Hispanic dish?**

My comfort food is pupusas, I live in St. Helens and it is a struggle to find pupusas in town. Since we are not close to any Salvadorian restaurants, my mother and I took the initiative to learn how to make pupusas to eat them regularly. Meat + cheese + masa = you cannot go wrong.



## GLORIA RUIZ



Gloria is a **Patient Access Specialist** at the Knight Cancer Institute. She is a scheduling coordinator and works face to face with patients.

**Length at OHSU:** *3 years*

### **What does being Hispanic mean to you?**

Growing up Mexican-American always left me feeling like I was not “Mexican” enough for my culture and not “American” enough. Being Hispanic to me means to remember not being so worried about fitting in and embracing who I am and my diverse identity. It means that I need to remember where I am coming from, own it, embrace it, and wear it proudly that I am Mexican-American. My culture allows me to teach and share with others about the fantastic culture I am a part of. One of the values that I appreciate in my culture is the importance of family. We pride ourselves on our last name and try to represent it with honor and

pridefulness.

Within my family, one of the values we uphold is the importance of health; you can have everything but what matters the most is that you and your family are healthy. Even if you have little to offer, all that matters is genuinely helping others and not expecting anything in return. It just reminds me to appreciate my health and value things in my life. My mom would say, “lo que importa mas es la salud” (what matters most is being healthy.)

### **When you were growing up, who inspired you, and who inspires you now?**

Growing up, my dad inspired me. I saw him working hard every day, always working to provide for us, and I do not ever remember hearing him complain about it. Today, people who care and look out for others inspire me.

### **What is your favorite Hispanic dish?**

Birria is my favorite. My mom always made us our favorite meal for the birthdays of my siblings and me. It is my comfort food now.



## Leslie Garcia



Leslie is the **Associate Dean Diversity, Equity and Inclusion** for the School of Medicine.

**Length at OHSU:** 30 years

### **What are some of the things you love most about your Hispanic heritage?**

Growing up bilingual and bicultural has its advantages and one that is very special to me is our personal identities with each culture and language. I've heard many people express it in simple words as "transforming ourselves between two worlds." Early exposure to two cultures enables us to absorb cultural messages and create our own identities. It is a lifetime of navigating schools, work, neighbors, family, social environments, food, traditions, etc., and also feeling at home in two cultural worlds that make us unique. I am proud of my indigenous roots and can trace my ancestors to the Otomi people.

### **What is a family tradition you wish to pass down, that your parents have passed down to you?**

The meaning and importance of having values and the unspoken loyalty that feeds from it. Latinos come from all races. In my own family, some are white, and some of us are indigenous. We know that we should not make assumptions based on phenotype or on how an individual presents themselves. We need to have an open mind and be accepting when people tell us who they are and if they say that they do not want to be called a generic name/label is important to increase our cultural understanding and acceptance of others... noting that is not one fits all.

I also share my cultural practices that have been passed to me and now passing down to my children. For example, a very important tradition is celebrating Dia De los Muertos which is an important practice to keep our families united, strong, and remembrance of our ancestors and their stories. Putting together our ofrenda, decorating with candles, pictures of our loved ones who have passed and placing many marigold - cempasúchil flowers - is a tradition that stems from the Aztecs. It's deeply rooted in pre-Hispanic Aztec rituals tied to the goddess Mictecacihuatl, or the Lady of the Dead, who allowed spirits to travel back to earth to commune with family members. That tradition was blended with the Roman Catholic observance of All Saints Day by the Spaniards. My flowerbeds are filled with marigolds, as we prepare for this celebration that takes place in November.

### **What is your favorite Hispanic dish?**

My favorite dish is enchiladas mineras, my favorite music is all types from cumbia, classic rock, and country and my favorite hot sauce is my mama's homemade salsas.