



Melinda E. Martinez

Diversity Champion

Director of Marist College Liberty Partnerships Program

Age: 35

Bio: Melinda E. Martinez is a proud Latina who is passionate about providing individuals with platforms to succeed. Growing up in an impoverished neighborhood (in Rockland County, NY) helped mold Melinda into the person that she is today. Her humble beginnings are what helped her become an appreciative person. That is why she focuses on empowering youth and women of color. Through education, access, and professional development, Melinda helps these individuals achieve their personal and professional goals.

Melinda attributes her personal and professional success to various individuals. Her Puerto Rican mother and Dominican father instilled the value of education in her. They encouraged her to become financially independent by taking advantage of the countless opportunities that this country offers. Melinda did this by furthering her education and successfully graduating from a prestigious college. In 2007, Melinda obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English/Concentration in Theatre from Marist College (Poughkeepsie, NY). In 2013, she obtained a Master of Arts Degree from Marist. She was the valedictorian/guest speaker of her 2013 class. Melinda attributes her success to the support from her family, professors, and the Arthur O. Eve Higher Education Opportunity Program at Marist. Since Melinda had numerous people invest in her, she dedicated her life towards helping others. She did this by becoming an educator, education ad-

ministrator, and diversity champion.

For over a decade, Melinda has been helping youth and women of color achieve their personal and professional goals. Since 2007, Melinda has run numerous Sylvan Learning Centers in New York, New Jersey, and Florida. She has taught diverse pupils and helped them excel academically. Currently, Melinda is the Director of the Marist College Liberty Partnerships Program (LPP). Marist LPP is a New York State Education Department grant-funded, dropout prevention, college access program, and workforce readiness program for 341 diverse inner-city youth. The program's holistic approach focuses on fulfilling students' academic, social, emotional, and career needs. At Marist, Melinda also serves as a Diversity Council member. She provides advisement to improve the College's policies, practices, structures, climate, and culture.

Aside from her roles at Marist College, Melinda is also an active member of the National Diversity Council and the Hispanic Alliance Career Enhancement (HACE) New York City Alumnae Board. HACE is a national non-profit that is dedicated to the employment, development, and advancement of current and aspiring Latino professionals. Through HACE, Melinda facilitates career development, diversity, and inclusion workshops for women of color and top executives of color from Fortune 500 companies.

By empowering the youth and women of color, Melinda is a change agent. She is proud of her roots. Melinda strives to help others embrace their roots and journeys. She also helps others achieve their personal as well as professional goals.

WORDS OF WISDOM:

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

—Philippians 4:13