

Special Neighbor

Walter Diaz, the vice president for student affairs at Eastern Connecticut State University, was presented a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Connecticut Association of Latinos in Higher Education.
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ECSU administrator gets lifetime honor

BRETT DONOVAN
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

WILLIMANTIC — An experienced administrator of higher education for more than 30 years received statewide recognition for his long-running achievements last month.

Walter Diaz, the vice president for student affairs at Eastern Connecticut State University, was presented a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Connecticut Association of Latinos in Higher Education (CALAHE) at the University of Hartford Dec. 7.

As someone who is well-known around the ECSU campus for his ongoing commitment to the student body, Diaz received the award in recognition of his adherence to CALAHE's mission and helping students achieve their academic potential.

Since arriving at ESCU in July 1999, he's filled roles in a variety of capacities at the university.

Those include time as the director of career services, two-and-a-half years as acting director of the Office of Housing and Residential Life and, eventually, assuming the role of dean of students in 2010.

Within those roles, Diaz pioneered a number of innovative programs designed to enhance the quality of the student body.

One of his programs, a campaign titled "Tell Somebody," was implemented to improve the reporting of student behavioral concerns and ultimately improve a sense of safety on campus.

Another example includes an expanded "Cultural Calendar," an effort that has resulted in a 50 percent increase in diversity and social justice programs, according to a release from ECSU.

Diaz's various administrative duties extend over to his mentoring of hundreds of students in student clubs and university initiatives, in addition to numerous school committees.

His 30-plus years of higher education experience spans from work at Tunxis Community College in Farmington, Dartmouth College's Thayer School of Engineering in New Hampshire, SUNY Institute of Technology in Utica, N.Y., and the University of Connecticut.

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