

Frank Garcia, Jr.

was named Executive Director of the Puente Project in July of 2005, after serving as Puente's Director of School and College Programs, Director of Puente's Northern California Regional Center, and Deputy Executive Director.

The Puente Project is a national-award winning academic preparation program which serves 34 high schools and 59 community colleges statewide. Sponsored by the University of California and the California Community Colleges, Puente's mission is to increase the number of educationally disadvantaged students who enroll in four-year colleges and universities, earn college degrees, and return to the community as mentors and leaders of future generations. Puente directly serves over 14,000 students per year. An estimated 77,000 additional students benefit each year from the extended impact of Puente's professional development programs.

Frank has twenty-eight years of experience in the field of higher education, and started his own education at Cabrillo College. While there, he helped raise the necessary funds to start the Educational Opportunity Program and hire the College's first Latino counselor. He then attended San Francisco State University, and transferred to UC Berkeley, where he earned his concurrent bachelor's degrees in Sociology and Chicano Studies. Frank continued his studies at Stanford University, concentrating on bilingual/multicultural education, and access and retention of students of color in higher education.

He has taught at San Francisco State University (SFSU), in the Elementary and Secondary Education Teacher Training Programs at Fresno State University, and at Washington State University as an Assistant Professor in the School of Education and the Department of Comparative American Cultures.

At SFSU, Frank held a series of academic and administrative positions: Assistant Professor of Education, Director of the Mission Academic Complex Academic Support Group, Director of the Accelerated Schools Project, and Coordinator of the Step to College Program. In addition, he was a founding staff member of the Oakland Street Academy Alternative High School, where he taught social studies and later served as principal. Frank's commitment to access, equity and quality in education also led to eight years of service on the Hayward Unified School District School Board. He continues to be active in a number of community organizations, including the Hispanic Community Affairs Council (Alameda County), La Alianza de Hayward, and the Kid's Breakfast Club.

As a former community college student, Frank has a deep understanding of the challenges facing today's community college student. He has devoted his career to ensuring that students are able to maximize their academic, personal and professional potential, and has demonstrated great tenacity in his own educational and professional careers. He demonstrates commitment to students and their families, work in higher education administration, and service to his community.