

Dr. Rocio Rivadeneyra is the daughter of Mexican immigrants who instilled the importance of education to better oneself, the family, and community. This background informs both her academic interests and the ways in which she makes an impact as a leader. With a career spanning over two decades in higher education, Dr. Rivadeneyra has been a faculty member at Illinois State University in the Department of Psychology with affiliations in Latin American and Latino/a Studies and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. She served as Director of the Honors Program from 2016-2020, where she implemented holistic admissions and more inclusive practices in the curriculum and general program leading to growth in enrollment and diversity of the program. Dr. Rivadeneyra focused on similar goals when she became Interim Chair of the Department of Communication Science and Disorders. Dr. Rivadeneyra currently serves as the Associate Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences at Illinois State University where her portfolio includes academic programs, curriculum, and student success.

As a scholar, Dr. Rivadeneyra studies Latino/a youth development with a focus on gender, ethnic identity, and sexual socialization through English- and Spanish-language media in the United States. Rivadeneyra was a Visiting Professor at the Center for AIDS Prevention Studies at the University of California, San Francisco as part of the Collaborative HIV-Prevention Research in Minority Communities Program and a Ford Foundation Fellow.

Dr. Rivadeneyra is interested in issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion and student success in higher education, having navigated these issues throughout her career. She has served in various roles at Illinois State University and beyond to advance access to higher education for underrepresented students. At ISU, she serves as the President of the Organization of Latino/a Employees and on the President's Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council. She serves on several state level boards such as Illinois Latino Council on Higher Education (ILACHE) and Diversifying Faculty in Illinois. In 2019, Rivadeneyra was awarded the Strand Diversity Achievement Award considered the crowning achievement for diversity work at Illinois State University.

Dr. Rivadeneyra earned her B.A. from the University of California, Irvine in Psychology and Social Behavior with a minor in Chicano/a Studies and her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in Psychology.