



Governing Board

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May 19, 2017

Subject: Nomination of Melinda Garcia, PhD
for the Ninth Annual Award for Outstanding
Contributions to Ethics Education

Dear APA Ethics Award Committee:

As is culturally fitting, we write and submit this letter as a collective, feeling privileged to be associated with Dr. Melinda Garcia, who is a member of our ethnic community, and whom we strongly recommend be selected as the Ninth Annual recipient of the Award for Outstanding Contributions to Ethics Education.

The Society of Indian Psychologist's Commentary on the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct, henceforth referred to as *The SIP Commentary*, was a ground-breaking work and a first for any ethnic minority psychological association in the United States (or possibly the world). For those who may be unfamiliar, The SIP Commentary originated as a dream by of one the elders in the Society of Indian Psychologists who had long believed that the APA Ethics Code had not been written in a manner that served the highest interests of ethnic minority psychologists. As a result, the APA Ethics Office and the APA Ethics Committee began a collaborative effort with members of the SIP to reexamine the APA Ethics Code and pinpoint why and how the code could or needed to be revised to better fit the cultural values, traditions, and belief systems of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian psychologists.

As the principal author of The SIP Commentary, Dr. Garcia was relentless in bringing her vision to fruition after several years of working with APA Ethics Committee members, as well as the membership of the SIP. Dr. Garcia's vision was for a Commentary that would speak to providers of Indigenous services all over the country and all around the world. That task would require going beyond linear, abstract, Cartesian logic that was more Eurocentric in nature and which perpetuated colonial worldviews and practices. Under Dr. Garcia's deft leadership, the SIP process was carefully and purposefully designed, ultimately embracing the foundational Native tradition of communicating in the language of stories. Stories that would bring the abstract to life, and in turn, bring the struggles experienced by Native psychologists to life.

The significance of The SIP Commentary, however, merely begins here. Although exclusively focused on stories about American Indian and Alaska Native psychologist's experiences, the stories also held the power to communicate across cultures. Everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, or culture, could relate to some, if not many aspects of each example provided in The SIP Commentary.

Likewise, having noted that this is merely where our story of Dr. Garcia's contribution to ethics begins, we would subsequently enumerate the wide range of ethics education activities in which The SIP Commentary has made an impact. To date, hundreds of SIP Commentaries have been purchased for use by students, professionals, and institutions. The following are just a few of the known applications and activities that have been associated with The SIP Commentary:

- The initial Community Based Participatory Action Research project that involved 70+ member stakeholders of SIP in a collaborative approach to research.
- A half-day continuing education workshop entitled "Skillful Navigation of Culture and Ethics" Workshop offered at the National Multicultural Conference and Summit 2015, Atlanta, GA.
- Presentation of continuing education workshops for mental health and cultural competence training for family service organizations.
- A blog to inform and train psychologists about ethics and cultural competence.
- Numerous ethics courses being taught at Universities, Colleges, Tribal Colleges, and Medical Schools around the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.
- As a training tool for counseling and internship programs.

The SIP Commentary has been so widely used and disseminated for ethics education that it has inspired members of the SIP, including Dr. Garcia, to develop and publish an Instructor training manual to identify and implement strategies for alerting psychology graduate professors, students, researchers, supervisors, and clinicians to the commentary's existence and to create supplemental materials enhancing its utility.

Finally, Dr. Garcia has published articles and book chapters related to ethics with research and mental health in indigenous populations and heads the development of a National Ethnic Minority Psychological Association monograph on Ethical considerations with ethnic minority populations.

In closing, although we believe that Dr. Garcia has made significant and outstanding contributions to the profession of psychology through her ethics education activities, they are but a small part of what she has contributed to our ethnic community and organization. Consequently, we certainly hope you will honor Dr. Garcia as the Ninth Annual recipient of the Award for Outstanding Contributions to Ethics Education for all that she has done in helping that original dream to become the reality that has inspired, taught, and guided so many students and professionals both in the U.S. and abroad, to view and understand ethics from an more diverse perspective.

Very Respectfully,

Wendy

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wendy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Arthur (Art) W. Blume, PhD
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President, Society of Indian Psychologists
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Art Blume', written in a cursive style.

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