

## **Juan R. Olivarez**

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Juan R. Olivarez, president of Grand Rapids Community College since 1999, is a native of Benavides, Tex., and grew up in Gary, Ind. He began his career in education in 1971 as a teacher with the Grand Rapids Public Schools.

His work for the Grand Rapids Public Schools spanned 20 years, during which time he also spent two years with the Detroit Public Schools. Olivarez has held positions as a teacher, school psychologist, supervisor of elementary special education, director of high incidence programs and services for special education, and executive director of research and development. In 1991 he became dean of institutional research at Grand Rapids Community College and was promoted to CEO of the Community Learning Enterprise in 1996.

Olivarez serves on the boards of many state, local, and national educational and civic organizations, including: the Connect Michigan Alliance, the Delta Strategy Advisory Board, the Economic Club of Grand Rapids, the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, the Grand Rapids Community Foundation, the Michigan Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (appointed by governor), and the National Institute For Literacy (appointed by President George W. Bush).

Among numerous other awards, Olivarez has received the Community Empowerment Leadership Award, Faith in Humanity Award from the Hugh Michael Beahan Foundation, the Communicator of the Year Award from the Association of West Michigan Communication Professionals, the 1999 Distinguished Community Trustee Award from Leadership Grand Rapids, and Master Presenter Recognition from the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development.

He received his PhD in family and child ecology from Michigan State University, an MA in education from Wayne State University, and his BA from Aquinas College.