

John L. Garcia, Ed.D.

Recipient of the Joe Norton Award, March 18th, 2001

Dr. John L. Garcia earned his Master of Education in 1986 and his Doctor of Education in 1990 from Vanderbilt University. He currently is an associate professor and counselor educator at Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas. John's work as a professor, supervisor, and mentor involves a unique blend of theoretical and philosophical strength, Jungian balance, and passion for the disenfranchised.

Immediately after John began his position at Southwest Texas State University in 1992, he recognized the need for curriculum surrounding diverse populations. Responding to an initiative to diversify curriculum, and at a time when many classes on multiculturalism focused predominantly or exclusively on ethnicity and race, John began the process of creating a course in Counseling Diverse Populations. This course included a significant portion to the study of gay, lesbian, and bisexual issues in counseling. John won an award from the Center for Multicultural and Gender Studies for this course creation, and it was so successful he created a second complementary class to enable both a didactic and experiential focus. His interest in Loss and Grief resulted in two additional classes in disenfranchised loss is highlighted, including that loss experienced by same-sex couples.

Although Southwest Texas State University still does not protect discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, John Garcia spearheaded an effort toward protecting it at a departmental level. He worked to create an evaluative instrument that mandates students must demonstrate respect for cultural differences, including sexual orientation, in order to progress in the program, and strove to heighten gatekeeping standards. This university's student population made up more one-half of the 50-member minimum for TAGLBIC to become a Texas Counseling Association division, a testament to the work of this innovator.

Rather than creating a compartmentalized notion of sexual minority issues, John continues to work diligently to infuse these issues into all courses. His interest in the symbolic, including metaphor, dreamwork, and intuition, supports his stance of "confusion" and "infusion" in counselor education and supervision. He provides safety to explore and discover, linger in ambiguity, and experience the differences and similarities in communities in an effort to unite humanity.