



# Carlos Grijalva

## Graduate Division Associate Dean

**C**ARLOS GRIJALVA REMEMBERS what it was like to arrive at Arizona State for graduate studies, the first in his family to have graduated from college. His father had wanted him to be a dentist. “When I started talking about graduate school in physiological psychology, he had no idea what I was talking about,” Professor Grijalva recalls. Also, he had no financial support for his first year.

Then things got easier. He won a Ford Foundation fellowship to pay for the rest of his studies, and “I also found a faculty mentor who took me under his wing and made sure I stayed on track,” Professor Grijalva says. “He and I became very good friends and eventually colleagues.”

Those experiences are foremost in his mind as he begins his tenure as Associ-

ate Dean in the Graduate Division, with responsibility for diversity programs, including the *Alliance in Graduate Education in the Professoriate* (AGEP) and the *Diversity Initiative for Graduate Study in the Social Sciences* (DIGSSS) grants. “I hope to use my own background to continue the good work the Graduate Division and the campus have done over the years,” he says. Building on those achievements, Professor Grijalva is especially interested in “retention issues: How do we keep disadvantaged students on track toward their degrees?”

A key element is mentoring. While African American and Latino students may not always find mentors of their own ethnicity, Professor Grijalva says, “there are many faculty who may not share the same heritage but nevertheless are sensitive to

individuals of various backgrounds and make excellent mentors.”

Other responsibilities include liaison with the Physical Sciences Division, the Anderson School of Management; the ACCESS & Basic Biomedical Sciences programs, academic programs in the David Geffen School of Medicine, and the Departments of Oral Biology, Psychiatry, and Comparative Literature.

Professor Grijalva brings to his new assignment a three-year term on the Graduate Council, which oversees graduate programs and their curricula. He also served on a special committee to examine factors that make universities and their departments first-rate. “Universities are always searching for the metric that tells them they’re on target,” he says, whether it is faculty publications and awards, graduation rates, or graduate career placements.

During his Graduate Division assignment, he will continue research looking at an animal model of anorexia nervosa, which has produced “some interesting paradigms,” he says. In his laboratory, rats are given access to a running wheel and also put on a restricted diet, he says. In some cases, “the animals actually start running more and eating less,” he says. The research team is experimenting with the injection of peptides into the brain to “encourage the rats to eat when their appetite starts to drop.” He points out that in analogous cases of activity-based human anorexia, especially among athletes or dancers, “something gets out of control and before you know it, the focus is on weight loss rather than performance.”

A past recipient of the Department of Psychology’s Distinguished Teacher award, he also plans to continue teaching. Especially close to his heart is the Introduction to Psychology course for undergraduates, where he tries “to talk not only about psychology but also about what they need to do to navigate through this complex system,” he says. For students like he once was, it’s important to let them know that the campus has resources to help them, he says, “so they have a foothold right at the beginning.”