



**Alumni Association Board of Directors
Director Biography**



Azucena de la Cruz, M.Ed, CAS '05 | SOE '11

University of Redlands/Education

As a first-generation college student, Azucena worked hard to take advantage of every opportunity that the U of R presented her and she was successful in doing so. She was heavily involved in athletics and honors societies. She played one season for the women's basketball team (2001-2002). As a sophomore, Azucena was one of twelve students of the class of 2005 to be selected to join the prestigious Vahe Proudian Interdisciplinary Honors Program. In 2003 she was selected to receive the selective Town and Gown Scholarship. Azucena was inducted for membership to the exclusive Phi Beta Kappa and the nation's honors society for history majors—Phi Alpha Theta—in 2005. She also was heavily involved with the U of R Economics Society and was selected as the Top Social Science Student for the Class of 2005. Azucena graduated as a Magna Cum Laude/Proudian Scholar with a Bachelors in History and a minor in Spanish. She later obtained her History-Social Science Single-Subject Teaching Credential ('06) and M.A. in Education ('11) from the U of R School of Education. Redlands was one of the best times of her life. She met a lot of life-long friends and her U of R degree opened many professional opportunities for her once she graduated.

Career/Future Plans

Soon after earning her teaching credential from the U of R in 2006, Azucena obtained a Social Science position in the school district that she grew up in—Lake Elsinore Unified—and has continued teaching there ever since. She started as a middle school teacher at Terra Cotta Middle School and eventually moved on to the high school level. She currently teaches AP Psychology and Psychology at her alma mater, Elsinore High School. In total she has been a teacher for 15 years. In 2018 she was honored by the Lake Elsinore LDS community with the Crystal Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching and in 2019 she was named as the November Teacher of the Month by Lake Elsinore Unified. Azucena was also a coach at Elsinore High School for 12 years before moving-up to coach at the college level in 2014.

In 2014, she began her first collegiate coaching position at the community college level as the Assistant Women's Basketball Coach in charge of recruitment at MiraCosta College in Oceanside, CA. In only five years (2014-19), she successfully facilitated the recruitment of four recruiting classes that created a winning culture at MiraCosta—with seven student-athletes receiving all-Pacific Coast Athletic Conference honors. During her tenure at MiraCosta College the women's basketball program achieved a 3.2 team GPA, ended a 50-year playoff drought, won the first playoff game in program history, and earned its first California Community College Athletic Association Southern Region and state ranking. She currently is the Assistant Women's Basketball Coach at the University of Saint Katherine in San Marcos, CA which is an NAIA affiliated school. In the future, Azucena hopes to coach at the NCAA Division 1 level and potentially become a professor of education.