



Mabel Rivera, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, University
of North Carolina at Pembroke,
Aberdeen, North Carolina, USA



What inspired you to apply for the Board of Directors? Learn directly from Mabel!

[Access the video.](#)

Biographical Information:

Dr. Mabel Rivera is an Associate Professor in the Department of Specialized Educational Programs at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. With a rich background as a former elementary and special education teacher in the public school system, she brings invaluable expertise in teaching children at risk of learning difficulties. Dr. Rivera has delivered numerous presentations and contributed extensively to research in the areas of instruction and assessment of English learners and students with exceptionalities.

In her current role, Dr. Rivera teaches both graduate and undergraduate courses within the educator preparation program, focusing on the characteristics and methods for teaching diverse learners. She is adept at delivering instruction in both in-person and online formats, ensuring that future educators are equipped to address the varied needs of their students. Beyond her teaching responsibilities, Dr. Rivera serves as the Director of Accreditation and Reporting for the Educator Preparation Program, where she is responsible for developing and submitting comprehensive reports to the state Department of Public Instruction, the US Department of Education, and the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation.

Dr. Rivera's commitment to the field of education extends beyond the classroom. She is actively involved with the North Carolina Council for Exceptional Children, where she has served as Past President and continues to mentor future educators as a Faculty Advisor for local student chapters. Her research interests are primarily centered on the education and prevention of academic difficulties in diverse learners, underscoring her dedication to improving educational outcomes for all students. Through her work, Dr. Rivera continues to make significant contributions to the field of education, advocating for effective instructional practices and promoting equitable learning opportunities.

Candidate Statements:

What makes CEC's mission meaningful to you? (Limit 150 words)

The Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) mission deeply resonates with me due to its integral dedication to inclusivity, equity, and advocacy in education. By supporting professionals working with individuals with disabilities, CEC plays a pivotal role in cultivating a more inclusive and accessible educational landscape. Through its advocacy efforts, CEC not only champions the rights of individuals with disabilities but also contributes to the creation of a more equitable society for all. Additionally, CEC's

commitment to advancing professional practice and scholarly research ensures that educators are equipped with the necessary resources and knowledge to effectively impact the needs of diverse learners. Furthermore, by actively promoting diversity and fostering networks and partnerships, CEC nurtures an informed community focused on enhancing outcomes for every student. In essence, CEC's mission closely aligns with my core values of inclusivity, advocacy, and education as catalysts for empowerment and societal progress.

There is such a great range of individual backgrounds and experiences that cannot be easily conveyed by answering simple demographic questions. Given [CEC's view of diversity](#), what facets of your life provide a context for the various experiences and perspectives you bring to discussions and your work? (Limit 150 words.)

As a Hispanic female, my personal background and experiences provide a rich context for the diverse perspectives I bring to discussions and work within CEC. Growing up in a multicultural environment has instilled in me a deep appreciation for diversity and inclusion. I can offer insights into how the initiatives and decisions of the Board of Directors impact diverse children with disabilities and their families. Additionally, my experiences as a member of underrepresented groups allow me to advocate effectively for equitable access to education and support services. Overall, my cultural identity and life experiences uniquely position me to contribute to discussions surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion within CEC.

Provide three specific examples of how your leadership experiences, including professional and volunteer, have had an impact on fostering change or moving an organization/entity forward. (Limit 300 words)

The following examples illustrate how my experiences have contributed to fostering change and driving progress in promoting inclusive education and support for individuals with exceptionalities through proactive leadership and collaborative efforts:

1. **Fostering Inclusive Practices:** As a special education teacher, I initiated a program focused on the inclusion of exceptional children in general education classrooms. By collaborating with general education teachers, administrators, and special education specialists, we designed a program that incorporated academic and behavioral supports based on progress monitoring and differentiated instruction. This initiative not only improved academic outcomes for students with disabilities but also promoted a culture of inclusivity within the school community.
2. **Leading Professional Development Initiatives:** In my role as a Faculty Advisor of our CEC Student Chapter, I took the initiative to organize and facilitate professional development opportunities for teacher candidates focused on best practices in inclusive education. By drawing on my expertise and collaborating with fellow professionals, we led professional development events that allowed our teacher candidates to apply differentiation, and behavior management strategies, and create accessible learning environments. These events equipped teacher candidates with the knowledge and skills to better support students with exceptionalities and fostered a sense of community and collaboration in our educator preparation program.
3. **Serving as a CEC Leader:** As President of the NC CEC Executive Board, I led organizational changes aimed at enhancing member and stakeholder communication. By implementing new communication channels such as regular newsletters, email updates, and social media engagement, we ensured that members were kept informed about upcoming events, professional development opportunities, and policy updates. Additionally, I initiated regular executive board meetings and feedback forms to gather input and address concerns more effectively. These changes not only strengthened the sense of community within our unit but also facilitated greater collaboration and participation among members.

CEC Membership Information:

Years of CEC Membership: 10 years

Division Membership(s): None

