

From El Salvador to Aurora: Aurora University president shares journey with Aurora Lions Club

[dh dailyherald.com/20240416/submitted-content/from-el-salvador-to-aurora-aurora-university-president-shares-journey-with-aurora-lions-club](https://dailyherald.com/20240416/submitted-content/from-el-salvador-to-aurora-aurora-university-president-shares-journey-with-aurora-lions-club)



Guest speaker Aurora University President Susana Rivera-Mills addresses the audience on April 4 during the Aurora Lions Club's biweekly meeting. *Courtesy of AI Benson*

Posted April 16, 2024 8:41 pm

Submitted by AI Benson

Aurora University president Susana Rivera-Mills, Ph.D., recently shared her journey as a migrant from El Salvador with Aurora Lions Club members.

On April 4, the club welcomed the AU president to the club's biweekly meeting at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Aurora. She became the 14th president of AU after serving as provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at Ball State University.

Rivera-Mills, 52, is the first Latina to lead Aurora University as president since the institution's founding in 1893. She arrived in the U.S. at the age of 12 as her family fled civil war in El Salvador. A first-generation college student, Rivera-Mills told how she personally experienced the transformative power of education.

She recalled how a high school Spanish teacher changed the trajectory of her life by saying to her in conversation —" ... when you go to college, not if you go to college ..."— a word choice that instilled in Rivera-Mills a belief that she could be anything she wanted to be.

The president stressed she loves Aurora's diverse population and that she is committed to providing access to education to diverse student populations. Rivera-Mills said she is focusing on forging partnerships with local entities. "Partnerships, especially internships, provide a pipeline of diverse professionals," she said.

At her inauguration, Rivera-Mills said, "Higher education is in a place of increasing challenges and accelerated change. AU's resilience and strength are evident in all of its accomplishments, and we will continue to courageously tackle these challenges. More than that, we will be a model of excellence and innovation for what the future of higher education needs as we serve a diverse community of learners."

At her presentation's conclusion, Randy Brown, Aurora Lions membership chair, surprised Rivera-Mills with a club membership application.

Founded in 1922, Aurora Lions Club is celebrating its second century of community service. Open to men and women, the club meets on the first and third Thursdays at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 27 S. Edgelawn Drive in Aurora. Prospective members are invited.

Call (630) 921-1307 for more information.