

# MICHAEL REYES

## An Interview with Michael

**What does diversity mean to you?** To me, the concept of diversity is a welcoming and inclusive one. Embracing diversity, as I think our FCM department has, means going an extra step to make an environment where everyone feels welcome—and more importantly they feel that they belong.

**Why is diversity important?** <https://hbr.org/2016/08/diversity-efforts-fall-short-unless-employees-feel-that-they-belong>

Diversity is a start, but, as this article points out, you have to grab the heart as well. I like how this piece frames the importance of a sense of belonging.

**Who are you?** I'm a collaborator. I'm creative and bring humor to all aspects of my life. I'm a bird watcher—which has made me much more observant in life. I'm a global citizen.

**Tell us about your family or upbringing?** My father was Mexican-American; born in East Los Angeles and at one point played professional baseball for the Hollywood Stars. My mother hailed from the Bay Area—born in Albany and grew up in Berkeley. They were married at the Santa Barbara Mission so that my father's side of the family could have a Catholic mass and my mom's side of the family could frame it as a state historical event. We were raised in Southern California. I was always tan. And my parents were a united front—there was no splitting them in terms of a hoped for decision. We are now on a genealogy adventure unlocking mysteries of the past. For example, I would not be here today had my mother not survived this tornado incident as a child in 1931:

<https://www.gendisasters.com/minnesota/8899/moorhead-mn-tornado-derails-train-may-1931>

**Are there other social identities that you have?** As I was closest in proximity to the Mexican American side of my family growing up, I very much relate to that culture on a number of levels: food, holidays, sense of family, the things from the past that surround me in my home. I'm also a gay man and have appreciated, along my life journey, the acceptance I've felt at various junctures. That included my medical school (UC Irvine), my residency (UCSF Fresno) and now my home department of FCM.

**How has this lead to opportunities or lead to barriers?** As I come packaged in many flavors (gay, physician, Latino and more) I was actively recruited in my early career to be part of federal review panels, a federal site visit consultant and on various organization boards and committees. This includes the UCSF Differences Matters Executive Advisory Board. Those opportunities have early on given be a national perspective on health care and, in particular, the HIV epidemic. The HIV epidemic is really a series of mini-epidemics all over the world.

**What else should we know about you?** I'm a bird watcher; not by choice! A friend who has been a lifetime bird watcher noted that I was doing global HIV health care worker capacity building work in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. He suggested that I take up the hobby, hire birding guides, to avoid sitting in hotels over the weekends of work trips. I took that advice and found a wonderful world outdoors. There are birding guides everywhere who will enthusiastically take you to lakes, dams, national parks and, it turns out, sewage plants. I've now been on birding trips to Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and Bhutan.



**Michael Reyes, MD**  
Principal Investigator

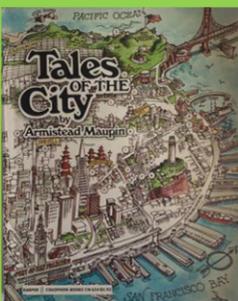
## INSPIRATIONS

Family: Loving and quirky.

Colleague: I'm thrilled to work with my UCSF Pacific AETC team. They are very present in their work with large hearts.

Place: Being on the water in any way possible.

Book: Tales Of The City Books



Song: Le Jazz Hot from "Victor/Victoria"

Quote:

"In the time of your life, live—so that in that wondrous time you shall not add to the misery and sorrow of the world, but shall smile to the infinite delight and mystery of it."

**-William Saroyan**

