Dr. Juliet V. García has devoted her life’s work to public service and has become a national thought leader in higher education innovation. Named the first female Mexican-American president of a US college or university in 1986 at Texas Southmost College, Dr. García then spearheaded the creation of the University of Texas at Brownsville in 1991 forming a unique partnership with the community college that consolidated the fiscal, physical and human resources of both institutions, eliminated redundancy in administrative structures, increased efficiency, and eliminated all transfer barriers for students in the South Texas border region.

After the Partnership was terminated in 2011, Dr. García began a grass roots effort to envision a new 21st Century University model for UT Brownsville. As the project gained statewide and national interest, the University of Texas System Board of Regents voted to create a new university in the Rio Grande Valley that embraced the 21st Century University guiding principles, consolidated two UT universities and established a medical school. Dr. García was a key member of the team that successfully gained authority from the Texas legislature to establish the new university. The new UT Rio Grande Valley University is scheduled to open its doors officially in September 2015.

After serving as a college and university president for 28 years, she was named the founding Executive Director of The University of Texas Americas Institute in 2014.

Dr. Garcia has served on the transition teams of two Presidential administrations, was a member of The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, and chaired the Advisory Committee to Congress on Student Financial Assistance and the American Council of Education (ACE), the nation’s largest higher education association.

Among the many honors she has received for her work is recognition by Fortune magazine as one of the World’s 50 Greatest Leaders, the American Council on Education Lifetime Achievement Award, honorary doctorates from the University of Notre Dame and Brown University and the Mexican consulate’s Ohtli Award, the government’s highest recognition awarded to foreigners who have improved the lives of Mexicans living abroad. In 2009, Time magazine named her one of the Top 10 College Presidents in the U.S.

As Executive Director of the UT Americas Institute, Dr. García will focus on help resolving complex and critical issues facing the Americas for broad social impact and to nurture next generation leadership. The Institute will be UT System’s mechanism to serve as a convening voice to help resolve issues facing the Americas and the Global South and serve as a nexus for interdisciplinary groups to come together and focus on creating core competencies in leadership on critical issues. It will accomplish this through sponsorship of seminars, next generation leadership programs, public conferences and events and policy programs for consensus building and problem solving.