JC Vazquez, multicultural coordinator at Utah State University's Center for Persons with Disabilities, was recognized by the university as part of its 20th annual Diversity Awards. The awards recognize individuals and organizations on campus and in communities served by USU who have made significant contributions to affirmative action, equal opportunity and diversity.

Vazquez, who is also a project coordinator for the CPD’s Center for Technical Assistance for Excellence in Special Education, was recognized in the Staff category for his development of programs to encourage high school students of ethnic minority backgrounds to come to USU and for providing effective support to them while they are at USU. He has also developed a program called Diversity and Cultural Awareness, which is a training program for various educational organizations.

He has developed and facilitated programs to support multicultural students through the application, admission and transition process at USU. He also oversees scholarships, housing waivers and has helped to create work-study opportunities for multicultural students. He served as the advisor of the Utah State University Hispanic Student Union promoting Latino culture with events on and off campus. He promoted higher education through Cache Valley’s K-12 parent associations, multicultural clubs and organizations.

“It is a very humbling experience to be recognized and awarded for doing the work I love and am passionate about,” Vazquez said. “Diversity is all around us… it is who we are as individuals, a community and a nation. However, with such great diversity there are some challenges we face—challenges of equity, respect and understanding. I am very privileged to do my part in the work I have been entrusted with to provide awareness to individuals at various levels and collaborate with others to embrace the concept of diversity and see it as an asset in society rather than a burden.”