The prestigious 2020 SHPE Technical Achievement and Recognition (STAR) Awards honor outstanding professionals for their dedication, commitment, and selfless efforts to advance Hispanics in STEM careers. STAR Awards also recognize a company and government agency for demonstrating significant, measurable, and visible assistance to further SHPE’s programs.

Nomination details ➤➤
PART 1 // WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28  
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM EST

- Hispanic in Technology Award – Government
- Promising Engineer Award
- Manager of the Year
- Community Service Award
- Diversity Award
- Educator of the Year – K-12
- Educator of the Year – Higher Education
- Young Investigator Award
- Hispanic ERG of the Year

PART 2 // THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29  
5:45 PM - 7:00 PM EST

- Professional Role Model Award
- Student Role Model Award – Undergraduate
- Student Role Model Award – Graduate
- Innovator Award
- Corporate Achievement Award
- SHPE Star of Tomorrow
- SHPE Star of Today
- Dr. Ellen Ochoa Award
- Company of the Year
- Government Agency of the Year
- Jaime Oaxaca Award
- Educator of the Year – K-12
- Educator of the Year – Higher Education
- Young Investigator Award
- Hispanic ERG of the Year

EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR – K-12
- Hispanic ERG of the Year
CONGRATULATIONS to our 2020 SHPE STAR Award Winners

Dr. Jennifer Lopez
Sensors Directorate

Young Investigator Award
This award is a major honor that the organization bestows on the top people and institutions in the industry, academia and government.

Dr. Angel Flores
Directed Energy Directorate

Hispanic in Technology Award — Government
This award is presented to a Hispanic engineer or scientist in the government who has made outstanding impacts to their field through a single significant contribution or through the leadership of a major technical project.

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AFRESEARCHLAB.COM/CAREERS
Hispanic in Technology Award - Government

Dr. Angel Flores
Air Force Research Laboratory

Dr. Angel Flores received a B.S. in Electrical Engineering and a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering from the University of Miami. Dr. Flores subsequently joined the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) where he is currently a Senior Research Scientist. At AFRL, he leads research on power scaling and beam combination of high-energy fiber lasers. He is also an adjunct professor at the University of New Mexico where he works on next generation laser technologies. Recently, Dr. Flores’ outstanding technical reputation has earned him the prestigious Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR) Star Award.

Promising Engineer Award

Osvaldo Bianchi
JPMorgan Chase & Co.

Osvaldo Bianchi was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park with a B.S. in Electrical Engineering. During his final year of college, he got the opportunity to intern at JPMorgan and was offered a full-time role upon graduation. He currently works on an engineering team that is building a shared platform for other developers. Osvaldo is the current leader of the Hispanic Community in the greater Delaware office for JPMorgan Chase & Co. He also proudly serves as a leader on the Diversity and Inclusion Council.

Manager of the Year

Enrique Riojas
John Deere

Enrique Riojas was born in Monterrey, Mexico. He attended college at ITESM in Monterrey for Mechanical and Industrial Engineering. He started his professional career with John Deere as an intern in 1999. Since then he has held 11 different positions within six John Deere units internationally. When he made a permanent relocation to the US in 2012, Enrique quickly noticed the disparity between the Hispanic population and STEM representation and became actively involved in SHPE. In 2016, Enrique helped found the John Deere Hispanic/Latino Leadership Council (HLLC) to attract, develop, and promote diverse talent.
Community Service Award

Esneyder Ospina
Verizon

Esneyder Ospina is the Director of Network System Performance at Verizon, and has held multiple leadership positions including RF Design Engineering, Network Optimization and Capacity Management. Esneyder is the sponsor of the company’s University of Puerto Rico talent recruitment and development program. In 2018, he was awarded the Luminary Honoree Award by the Great Minds in STEM organization for being a leader and role model for the Hispanic community. Born and raised in Cali, Colombia, Esneyder received his Bachelor’s degree in Electrical Engineering and his Master’s degree in Telecommunications.

Diversity Award

Maricela Alberto
Qualcomm

Maricela Alberto is a first-generation Mexican-American who not only has lived through an immigrant story endured by countless other Latinx but was also a teen parent who transformed her family’s fate. Her career as Senior Legal Specialist at Qualcomm provides her experience in navigating both the legal and STEM world, a space few women of color currently occupy. As the President of LatinQ, a Qualcomm employee network, she has received multiple accolades for driving diversity initiatives that reflect Qualcomm’s pledge to the Hispanic Promise.

Educator of the Year - K-12

Sonymarie Socarrás-Figueroa
Colegio Mater Salvatoris

Born in Puerto Rico, Sonymarie Socarrás Figueroa graduated from Cornell University with both a B.S. in Operations Research & Industrial Engineering and a Master’s in Engineering Management. For 14 years, she led teams within Procter & Gamble in Puerto Rico & Latin America. She then became an independent strategic management consultant supporting V2A Consulting. For the last four years, while working as Strategy to Execution Vice President for Abarca Health in Puerto Rico, she designed and taught the Principles of Engineering elective course to 10th graders at Colegio Mater Salvatoris High School as a way of giving back to our youth. She also brought together a team of students to start a SHPE Jr. Chapter.
STAR AWARD PRESENTATION - PART 1 // WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28 // 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM EST

Educator of the Year - Higher Education

Dr. Adeeba A. Raheem
University of Texas at El Paso

Dr. Raheem received her Ph.D. in Construction Management from the University of Florida in 2014. She holds multiple master’s degrees in Building Construction, Environmental Engineering, and Civil Engineering. She is now serving as an Assistant Professor and Director of the Construction Safety Program at the University of Texas, El Paso. This program is funded by the prestigious and highly competitive OSHA Sasan Harwood Grant. Under her leadership, more than 8,000 hard-to-reach Hispanic workers have been trained on various safety topics. More than 300 local small construction companies have benefited from this program.

Young Investigator Award

Dr. Jennifer Lopez
Air Force Research Laboratory

Dr. Jennifer Lopez was born in Sacramento, CA. She is a second generation Mexican and Chinese American. Her undergraduate research in knot theory earned her a full-ride to San Francisco State University for her Master’s degree in Mathematics. Jennifer then earned her Mathematics Ph.D. at the Air Force Institute of Technology. Upon completing her Ph.D., Jennifer returned to the government working for the Air Force Research Laboratory. She is a Mathematical Lead for the Multi-domain Analytics Development & Evaluation team. Jennifer continues to volunteer and she is currently the Vice President of Student Affairs for her local SHPE chapter.

Hispanic ERG of the Year

Northrop Grumman Corporation
One Adelante ERG

Northrop Grumman is committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards, embracing diversity, and being an ideal corporate citizen. One Adelante is a grass-roots, all-volunteer, all-inclusive, cohesive Employee Resource Group (ERG) focused on developing Hispanic talent. It is committed to ensuring that the mission of providing Hispanic cultural awareness, career advancement, and community involvement becomes a mainstay in today’s society. In the last year, the award-winning One Adelante held 210 events, volunteered over 5,000 hours, assisted with 340 new hire offers, and impacted over 1,000 students. Founded in 1993, One Adelante is a close knit Familia that stays true to its name by helping 2,800 members in 17 chapters across the nation move forward and get ahead.
Here, your innovative and bold ideas are celebrated.

Congratulations to 3Mer, Laura Lara Rodriguez, Ph.D., Research Specialist on being named the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers Star of Tomorrow.
**Professional Role Model - Region 1**

**Zoraida Martinez Duarte**  
*Foster Farms*

Zoraida Martinez was born in La Piedad Michoacán, Mexico. By working three jobs and receiving over $15,000 in scholarships, Zoraida graduated from Fresno State in 2012 with a degree in Computer Engineering. In 2013, through DACA, Zoraida applied for a role at Foster Farms as an IT Trainee. Today, Zoraida is an IT Programmer Analyst II at Foster Farms where she supports, develops and leads technical solutions that enhance the needs of the Sales & Marketing Team. Zoraida became a SHPE Lifetime member in November, 2016 and is the 2020 SHPEtinas Conference co-chair.

**Professional Role Model - Region 2**

**Emily Anne Vargas**  
*University of Southern California*

Emily Anne Vargas is originally from Miami, Florida. She is a Materials Science and Engineering Ph.D. student at the University of Southern California, where she is studying the problems with the manufacturing and behavior of Ceramic Matrix Composites. Emily Anne is a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow and a GEM National Consortium Fellow. Previously, Emily Anne graduated from Florida State University with a Bachelor of Science in Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering. Currently, she is the Graduate Representative for the SHPE-USC Chapter, the National Graduate Committee Co-Chair, and Director of Programs and Professional Development for the SHPE-LA Professional Chapter.

**Professional Role Model - Region 4**

**Juan D. Valentin II**  
*U.S. Patent & Trademark Office*

Juan Valentin II holds a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from Clarkson University. He is currently the Acting Supervisory Innovation Development Program Manager for the Office of Innovation Outreach at the United States Patent and Trademark Office. In this role, he leads a team responsible for disseminating basic, high-level information about the various forms of Intellectual Property (IP) and its importance in the innovation ecosystem. Juan also continues his work with the Office of Education (OE) and focuses on the development of educational projects with an emphasis on STEM and IP literacy.
Professional Role Model - Region 5

Manuel De La Cruz
ExxonMobil Corporation

Manuel “Manny” R. De La Cruz is originally from San Antonio, Texas. In 2010, he graduated from the University of Texas San Antonio with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering and was extended a full-time offer with ExxonMobil in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He is currently the Olefins Optimizer for North America at the ExxonMobil Chemical Company. For the past 9 years, Manny has also been heavily involved with the outreach and retention of top notch minority candidates. Manny has a lead role in the ExxonMobil SHPE recruiting team and has doubled down on helping students across the country.

Professional Role Model - Region 6

Manuel G. Millán Rodríguez
Rockwell Automation

Manuel G. Millan Rodriguez was born in San Germán, Puerto Rico and holds a B.S. in Computer Engineering from the University of Puerto Rico. Manuel has worked as a Systems Analyst, Sterilization Engineer, Automation Controls Engineer, and most recently as a Sr. Field Support Engineer. He joined Rockwell Automation in 2018, where he also serves as the Inclusion Change Team leader for the Minneapolis office, as well as the VP of Outreach for the Latinx Professional Network ERG. He is currently serving his fourth term as the Corporate and Community Relations Chair for the SHPE Twin Cities Professional Chapter.

Student Role Model - Undergraduate Region 1

Mariela Hernandez
University of California, Berkeley

Mariela is a first-generation Latina born and raised in Salinas, California. As a student at UC Berkeley studying Cognitive and Computer Science, a tech eclectic, and racial equity advocate, Mariela’s work revolves around redesigning systems through a compassion-based approach. She learned about SHPE by happenstance through her school’s chapter (H.E.S.) and believes that her involvement in this organization molded her college experience. Through her involvement, Mariela has been able to create change centered around racial equity in academia and the tech industry to transform the space for current and future Black/Latinx folks.
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Student Role Model - Undergraduate Region 4

Marvin Rios
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Marvin Rios is a Chemical and Biological Engineering Student at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Through his years at RPI, he has served in various leadership positions that have helped him advocate for underrepresented minority groups on his campus. Marvin has been President of SHPE-RPI and has served as either an Advisor or Director for their two largest events: NSBE/SHPE Career Fair and SHPE Outreach Weekend. Marvin also served as the Chair for RPI’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Currently, he is the SHPE Upstate NY Sub-Regional Student Representative.

Student Role Model - Undergraduate Region 5

Isela Rivera
Louisiana State University

Isela Rivera was born and raised in Tamaulipas, Mexico and is currently a Senior at Louisiana State University where she is studying to receive her Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering. Throughout her undergraduate career she has been a stellar student maintaining academic excellence in addition to acquiring professional experience by working at companies such as SE Tylose, ExxonMobil and recently Valero. Isela also gives back to the Hispanic community through SHPE by taking on leadership roles both locally and regionally.

Student Role Model - Graduate Region 3

Luz D. R. Sotelo
University of Nebraska, Lincoln

Luz Sotelo (she/they) is from South Texas and grew up in central Mexico. She is pursuing a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering and Applied Mechanics at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her research focuses on methods for ultrasonic nondestructive evaluation of complex domains, with a vision of accessibility, safety, and sustainability. She aims to remove barriers for minoritized people in STEM careers, and is involved as a graduate student leader at her university, community, and in SHPE.
Congratulations to Osvaldo Bianchi on being awarded the 2020 SHPE Technical Achievement and Recognition (STAR) Promising Engineer Award!
**Innovator Award**

**Dr.-Ing. David I. González-Aguirre**  
*Intel Corporation*

Dr.-Ing. David I. González-Aguirre was born in Mexico and graduated with honors at The Centro de Enseñanza Técnica Industrial - Guadalajara. He holds a Master’s in Science at the National Polytechnic Institute (Cinvestav) on Robot Vision. He gained honors in Doctor of Engineering on Environmental Robot Perception at the KIT-Germany. He conducted post-doc research for EU projects on Robotics and AI. His work includes 26+ publications in top venues and 35+ filed patents in robotics, smart-spaces, autonomous vehicles, AR, etc. He now is a senior robotics-researcher at Intel-Labs. He is a member of the Mexican Net of Talent Aboard, Intel Latin Network, SHPE, and German Society for Robotics.

**Corporate Achievement Award**

**Jesse A. Ortega**  
*General Motors*

Once Jesse learned that engineers created the Apollo spacecrafts used to land on the moon, he knew that is what he wanted to be. In 1976 Jesse was accepted to the College of Engineering at the University of California, Berkeley. For the last 40 years, Jesse has held many leadership positions within General Motors, including Vehicle Chief Engineer, and led teams on three continents. He has been an instrumental part of significant changes at GM: Saturn Corporation, the development of Global Architectures, and the global expansion of Battery Electric Vehicles. He is the proud father of 9 children and grandfather to 12.

**SHPE Star of Today**

**Crystal E. Ramón-Miranda**  
*Chevron*

Crystal E. Ramón-Miranda was born and raised in Houston, Texas. She was a recipient of the prestigious Bill Gates Millennium Scholarship and attended Rice University where she majored in Chemical Engineering. While at Rice, she became actively involved with the SHPE student chapter. Her involvement with SHPE helped Crystal receive an internship with Chevron, resulting in a successful 15 year technical career. She currently works as a Process Safety Advisor. Crystal continues to stay involved as an active member of the SHPE Houston Professional Chapter and an advisor to the Rice University SHPE Chapter.
STAR of Today Award

CONGRATULATIONS
Crystal Ramon-Miranda

Process Safety Advisor
Chevron Environmental Management and Real Estate Company
SHPE Star of Tomorrow

Dr. Laura M. Lara Rodriguez
3M

Dr. Laura M. Lara Rodriguez is a promising technical leader at 3M. As a Research Specialist, she has made significant discoveries in mineral technology. Her outstanding leadership and expertise have been applied to important 3M franchises that are based in ceramics, microreplication, and performance materials technologies. These advances constituted the foundation for the initiation and commercialization of new product platforms for Industrial Markets. Her keen focus on innovation has been recognized with the corporate Circle of Technical Excellence and Innovation (CTE&I) Award. She continues to advance mineral technology and sustainability initiatives at 3M.

Dr. Ellen Ochoa Award

Juanita Leal
The Boeing Company

Juanita Leal is an Associate Technical Fellow at The Boeing Company with expertise in Integration, Test and Evaluation in lab, ground, field, flight and space environments. Her technical impacts span across Boeing, the United States (US) Navy, the US Air Force and NASA. Juanita earned her Master and Bachelor of Science degrees in Electrical Engineering from California State University (CSU), Fresno. Juanita balances her life spending time with family, giving of her time as a Catholic missionary and Spanish language translator, reading, playing racquetball and flying airplanes as well as helicopters.
Company of the Year

Raytheon Technologies

Raytheon Technologies is defining the future of aerospace and defense with ambitious technologies that push the limits of known science. Their technologies help customers take on the world’s biggest challenges. Together they are advancing research and development around the globe. They support educational initiatives that inspire the next generation of scientists, engineers, and business professionals. Each year, Raytheon Technologies invests in programs that cultivate the knowledge and skills that lead to transformative technologies and fulfilling careers.

Government Agency of the Year

The California State University

The California State University (CSU) system receives this prestigious award in recognition of their support of SHPE and their endorsement of STEM awareness and access. The mission of CSU is to advance and extend knowledge, learning, and culture, while preparing students for a multicultural society. 62% of all bachelor’s degrees granted to California’s Hispanic students are conferred by the CSU. 40 years ago, the first SHPE Student Chapter was started at Cal State LA, and since then, the CSU system has grown to support nine chapters with over 500 members. The support of the CSU administration and its Deans ensures the ongoing growth and sustainability of its SHPE chapters for years to come.

Jaime Oaxaca Award

Dr. Francis J. Samalot Rivera

The Boeing Company

Dr. Francis J. Samalot Rivera is the technology leader responsible for a team of nine researchers in the area of structural thermoplastic composites for future commercial and military platforms with The Boeing Company. She holds a doctorate in Material Science and Engineering with a specialization in composite materials and nanotechnology. Today, Dr. Samalot is a recognized subject matter expert in process development for aerospace applications. Francis actively promotes the advancement of Hispanic professionals through her work with organizations like SHPE. She has served as SHPE’s Boeing company focal and on the Industry Partner Council since 2016.
See yourself as part of our team, creating the world’s next big innovation.

As a company with a long history of creating technology breakthroughs and the driving force behind 5G, we are always looking for the biggest thinkers from all backgrounds to join us in pioneering what’s next in wireless.

Qualcomm
Inventing the tech the world loves