

Ciencia Puerto Rico is profiled as a model to increase diversity in the sciences ^[1]

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No

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San Juan, PR - Ciencia Puerto Rico ([CienciaPR](#) ^[2]), an online network designed in 2006 to connect people interested in science and Puerto Rico, has been profiled in the prestigious scientific journal [PLoS Biology](#) ^[3] as a model to link scientists from groups traditionally underrepresented in science and increase their visibility and ability to reach out to their communities.

The article describes how CienciaPR, one of the largest networks of Hispanic scientists in the world, has been able to leverage its membership for initiatives that support science education in Puerto Rico and explains how the concept can be replicated to link other groups of geographically-dispersed scientists seeking to impact the development of science and research among their communities or countries of origin. The article was chosen by the editors of [PLoS Biology](#) as one of the most important articles of the publication.

As indicated in the article, CienciaPR activities have resulted in an increase in the number of science stories in the Puerto Rican press, in conferences to promote the professional development of young scientists, and in a book of essays that presents Puerto Rican scientists as

role models and explains scientific concepts with examples from the Puerto Rican landscape and cultural context. The latter has been used in classrooms in Puerto Rico to increase student interest in science.

"It is important to provide students with role models who come from communities like theirs. This counteracts common stereotypes about scientists, demonstrates that science is relevant to their lives, and encourages young people to aspire to careers in science." said Dr. Giovanna Guerrero-Medina, executive director of CienciaPR and principal co-author of the article. "Providing a database of Hispanic scientists and several forums and initiatives to talk about their work, has helped raise their visibility, in Puerto Rico and among Hispanics, " said Dr. Daniel Colón- Ramos, associate professor of cell biology at Yale University and founder of the network.

According to the National Science Foundation^[1], Hispanics only comprise 6 % of the science and engineering workforce, despite representing over 16% of the U.S. population. "Our experience with the creation of CienciaPR can serve as an example to other minority groups and to countries with similarly geographically-dispersed scientific populations, that are seeking to connect for research, training, education, and outreach opportunities" said Guerrero-Medina .

To access the article, please visit:

Guerrero-Medina G, Feliú-Mójer M, González-Espada W, Díaz-Muñoz G, López M, et al. (2013) Supporting Diversity in Science through Social Networking. ^[3] PLoS Biol 11(12): e1001740. doi:10.1371/journal.pbio.1001740

About Ciencia Puerto Rico

Ciencia Puerto Rico (www.cienciapr.org ^[2]) is a nonprofit organization that provides a collaborative space for anyone interested in science and Puerto Rico. The first and only initiative of its kind in the Puerto Rican archipelago, and one of the largest online communities of Hispanic scientists in the world, CienciaPR provides a platform that allows networking, resource sharing, and interaction between students and professors, and between scientists and the public. Its more than 6,500 members cover a large geographic footprint (48 countries), and a wide range of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines (over 100). Members include professional scientists, scientists-in-training, K12 students, science educators, and enthusiasts from the general public.

CienciaPR's mission is to promote the development of science in Puerto Rico; encourage scientific and educational collaborations that meet the needs of the Puerto Rican people; raise awareness about the importance of science in Puerto Rico and the role of the archipelago in the advancement of scientific knowledge worldwide; and serve as a tool for training the next generations of Puerto Rican scientists.

^[1] http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/wmpd/2013/pdf/nsf13304_digest.pdf ^[4]

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