

# Four new fellows join the CienciaPR team, two people change roles <sup>[1]</sup>

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Last September, CienciaPR welcomed four new fellows. Two people took on new roles.

Last September, CienciaPR welcomed new fellows and interns: Alondra Galarza Rodríguez, Viviana Sofía Flores Rivera, Daimarie Mujica Carrasquillo, and Patricia Rodríguez Moreno. Additionally, Alondra Caraballo Franco and Nathaly Villarreal transitioned into new roles within the organization.

A native of Hatillo, Galarza Rodríguez holds a bachelor's degree in telecommunications and broadcasting from the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo (UPRA). She joined the team as a

Capacity Building Fellow for Nonprofit Organizations under the Empowerment and Retention Program for Change Agents (PARACa, in Spanish). Known to the team by her first surname, she will help strengthen organizational capacity by supporting fundraising, communications, and other tasks.

For Galarza, being able to democratize science, transform science education, and contribute to professional development in the sciences motivates her in her role, as she believes that “(science) education is a privilege that everyone deserves.” Her hobbies include photography, professional makeup, playing video games, reading, aesthetics, and practicing crochet.

On the other hand, Flores Rivera is CienciaPR's inaugural Science Communication Fellow under the Public Engagement with Science Unit. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communications with a concentration in Journalism, a minor in Biomedical Sciences, and pre-med coursework.

Her work will involve editing science articles written by scientists, writing articles for CienciaPR and Puerto Rican media outlets, creating science communication content for the organization's social media, and assisting in finding interview sources for the “Jueves de Ciencia Boricua” segment under the “Puestos Pa’ La Mañana” program on Radio Isla, as well as for collaborations with “El Nuevo Día”.

In addition to her role with CienciaPR, Flores Rivera is an independent journalist for “Es Mental” magazine and the Yale School of Medicine communications office. The Caguas native enjoys cooking, salsa dancing, going to the beach, local tourism, practicing yoga, and engaging in physical activities for fun such as roller skating, cycling, hiking, jogging, and team sports.

As a journalist and science communicator, Flores Rivera shares “the mission of disseminating science and making it accessible to all of Puerto Rico through science communication” alongside “pioneering and inspiring women scientists.”

Meanwhile, Mujica Carrasquillo, a biotechnology student at Ana G. Méndez University in Carolina, is the new outreach intern for “Semillas de Triunfo”, a program that introduces middle and high school girls to careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) through hands-on experiences, mentoring, and leadership development. As an intern, she will assist with communications and coordination with teachers, guest speakers, and school visits, as well as help create educational content for school visits and interactive booths. She will also aid in the creation, editing, and distribution of STEM materials, “kits,” and guides for teachers and students.

For the Canóvanas native, supporting young girls on their journey toward STEM careers is inspiring. She expressed: “It’s truly admirable. The initiatives I’ve observed so far not only provide educational resources and opportunities but also create an environment where these young women can visualize a future full of possibilities and success in fields that have historically been underrepresented by them.” Her hobbies include reading, knitting, playing video games, practicing crochet, and sleeping.

Patricia Rodríguez Moreno, from Guaynabo, is in her second year of a bachelor’s degree in Cellular-Molecular Biology at the University of Puerto Rico at Río Piedras. She also joined the “Semillas de Triunfo” team as an intern, assisting with coordination and logistics tasks such as

managing team work platforms, preparing materials for events, and handling communications with STEM professionals who serve as mentors for the program's participants.

"The most motivating part of being part of the CienciaPR team is being able to contribute to the accessibility of information and resources within the scientific world, so that others can build and strengthen their careers in STEM," she commented. Her hobbies include reading, listening to music, and watching series.

### **Taking on new roles**

Caraballo Franco, previously the Capacity Building Fellow for Nonprofit Organizations under the Empowerment and Retention Program for Change Agents (PARACa), is now the coordinator of the "Semillas de Triunfo" program. In her new role, she will manage communications between participants and their mentors, send program announcements and requests, handle forms, documents, and required materials, and coordinate workshops ranging from computer science to self-love.

Known to the team as "Alon," she holds a Bachelor of Arts with a concentration in Humanities from the University of Puerto Rico at Cayey. Her hobbies include going to the beach, listening to music, watching series, spending time with friends, and reading.

On the other hand, Villarreal is now the Community Partnerships Coordinator for the Public Science Engagement Unit. Previously, she served as the Coordinator for the "L'Oreal For Girls in Science" program and later as the "Semillas de Triunfo" Coordinator.

She stated, "I will be supporting all connections with community leaders and the communities involved in the various programs of the Public Science Engagement Unit, and I will also collaborate with the CienciaCoLab program, always acting as a link between CienciaPR, the community, and the participants."

Nathaly will also be collaborating on strategic and communication plans to collect metrics for the program and create plans to strengthen its materials and processes. She holds a bachelor's degree in Cellular-Molecular Biology from the University of Puerto Rico at Río Piedras and a master's degree in Public Health Education from the Medical Sciences Campus. She also has a certification in Maternal and Child Health.

In addition to her role with CienciaPR, Nathaly works as a health educator with another nonprofit organization. Her current hobby is exploring the world of matcha tea and creating matcha in different flavors, with pumpkin spice and pistachio being her favorites.

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