

CienciaPR and El Nuevo Dia: A new network of boricua scientists ^[1]

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“Science is a patrimony of humanity”, sentences neurobiologist Daniel Colon Ramos with passion evident in each word. “As Puerto Ricans we want to see Puerto Rico playing a role in that creative process of understanding what is what makes us human beings”, he adds.

When this 30 year-old scientist studied in Harvard, he feared not to be able to forge a scientific career in Puerto Rico, not because the opportunities did not exist but because he did not know about them. Then, there was no community of scientists interested in Puerto Rico, nor anybody that oriented to young people on their possibilities. Although he still walks another land - studying his post-doctoral fellowship in Stanford University in California- Colon Ramos already knows that he will be able to do what he always wanted, “contribute to the improvement of the world, but from Puerto Rico”.

“Most of the science graduates stay here and most of them work in their field of study”, said doctor Adelfa Serrano Brizuelas, professor of the Medical Sciences Campus.

Scientific research is the first step to know how to deal with every day matters. For example, to study all night for an important test is not a very good idea, because “dreams consolidate the memory”. As, vegalteña Mónica Feliú Mójer explained, she is dedicated to study specifically how this happens at the molecular level. She studies “how the different neurons from the brain communicate”, she said.

“Understanding how things happen at the fundamental level, allows you to manipulate it to understand how one loses memory when one ages”, adds Colon Ramos on the investigation process that opens the doors to understand complex and heartrendering phenomena like the Alzheimer.

Feliú Mójer and Colon Ramos are in two different branches of science. Professor Serrano, in another one. She studies how parasites become resistant to common medicines.

The three have what Serrano describes as scientific curiosity. When Daniel was a kid, in Barranquitas, he liked observing and collecting the little animals that surrounded him, Mónica did the same in Vega Alta and the professor in her native Cuba. Now, all are part of the Council for the Advancement of Puerto Rico’s Scientific Research and Innovation (CAPRI).

The group is composed of scientists interested in the subject of Puerto Rico. They are investigators of different generations that exert science in different points from the planet. In their Internet page, www.cienciapr.org [3], they publish excellent scientific news about the Island.

Colon Ramos and Feliú Mójer live in the United States. Feliú works in an MIT laboratory.

The enthusiasm of Feliú, Segarra and an ample group of scientists solidified Colon Ramos’ initiative to create a community of Puerto Rican scientists and friends of the boricua. Many of them only know each other through the network they have established.

A network that aims to exchange information of the scientific work that it is made here and in the United States or anywhere in the World. Colon Ramos and Feliú Mójer, 22 years old, take themselves very seriously in their mission to share with the world the fascinating thing of science. That’s why they have established an exclusive collaboration with the Science section of El Nuevo Dia, to keep the general public informed about the success of our scientists.

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