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Yale bets on Ciencia Puerto Rico's model

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The newly formed Yale Ciencia Initiative will expand access to scientific knowledge, experiences, and careers among communities or populations traditionally underrepresented in, or underserved by, the scientific enterprise, the university has announced.

The new initiative, led by the Yale Center for Teaching and Learning, stems from a collaboration with Ciencia Puerto Rico [1], a network founded by Daniel Colón-Ramos, Yale associate professor of cellular biology. Ciencia Puerto Rico connects more than 7,000 scientists, students, and educators worldwide with ties to Puerto Rico who want to promote science education and careers. This vibrant network has leveraged its members' commitment and expertise to publish more than 200 science articles for the general public, develop culturally relevant science education resources, and provide career advice and connections to young scientists.

"The Yale Ciencia Initiative will establish programs based at Yale to enhance the scientific training and professional development of students across the nation and to develop culturally responsive strategies for the engagement of diverse audiences with science," said Giovanna Guerrero-Medina, executive director of Ciencia Puerto Rico and associate research scientist in the Center for Teaching and Learning. "Research and scholarship about how these types of science networks can be applied for these purposes will also be a big part of the initiative."

Jennifer Frederick, executive director of the Yale Center for Teaching and Learning, added, “This initiative provides a foundational resource for best practices in the development and implementation of culturally relevant science education and science networking efforts.”

The Yale Ciencia Initiative also aims to make scientific knowledge produced at Yale available to the world by working with Yale faculty and staff to increase recruitment and retention of underrepresented groups in the sciences, enhancing outreach locally, and partnering with other countries and communities that are interested in replicating Ciencia Puerto Rico’s model.

“Being able to understand, generate, and apply scientific knowledge is of utmost importance to individuals and societies in the current era,” said Guerrero-Medina. “Through the Yale Ciencia Initiative, we will explore new ways to ensure that no one is left out from the excitement of science.”

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