

Meet our Director of Science Education Programs and Community Partnerships ^[1]

Submitted by [Mónica Ivelisse Feliú-Mójer](#) ^[2] on 28 November 2017 - 2:00am



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To successfully implement our new strategic direction of transforming science education ^[3] to promote a culture of science, critical thinking and problem-solving in Puerto Rico, besides creating a Board of Directors ^[4] composed of internationally-recognized leaders in science, education and civic society, CienciaPR needed to hire a new staff member in Puerto Rico.

We needed a dynamic, committed, and passionate doer. Someone with a proven track record of creating innovative programs and partnerships to promote the development of science and science education in Puerto Rico.

We didn't have to look far, as we found that individual in **Gretchen Díaz, Ph.D., who officially became CienciaPR's Director of Science Education Programs and Community Partnerships in July 2017.** For over 10 years, Dr. Díaz served as part of the volunteer administrative team of CienciaPR. As a volunteer, she participated in numerous science

communication, science outreach, and science education projects. She created the blogs Borinqueña and Ciencia a tu Alrededor, and helped conceptualized and served as the first project coordinator of "Semillas de Triunfo" (Seeds of Success), the first STEM Ambassador Program for middle school girls in Puerto Rico.

Before joining CienciaPR's staff in 2017, Dr. Díaz was the Grants Program Director at the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust. She was responsible for the implementation of the first grant award mechanism in Puerto Rico with initiatives such as the Science and Technology Research Grants, the Small Research Grants and the Researcher's Startup Funds. At the Trust, Dr. Díaz also ideated and implemented successful outreach activities, which included the Research & Innovation Meetups, the Forward Research & Innovation Summit, and the Forward Grantees Symposium, among many others.

Dr. Díaz is the current President of the Puerto Rico Society of Microbiologists (PRSM), and has previously served as the PRSM's Board of Director's secretary, and ASM councilor. The PRSM is the local branch for the American Society for Microbiology (ASM), one of the largest international scientific professional societies, where she currently serves as a member of its Board of Directors.

Dr. Díaz has received numerous awards and honors from various organizations such as CROEM Alumni, the University of Puerto Rico, The Ohio State University, ASM, SACNAS, and the Ford Foundation, among others. In 2013 and 2017, she was recognized by the Senate of Puerto Rico for her professional achievements. Her work and projects have been featured on local and international media outlets, such as El Nuevo Día, el Vocero, Noticel, Metro, Caribbean Business, News in my Business, Diálogo, Voces del Sur, Periódico La Perla, Microbe, and Scientific American, among others.

Dr. Díaz joins Dr. Giovanna Guerrero-Medina, CienciaPR's Executive Director since 2012 and Dr. Mónica Feliú-Mójer, who served as CienciaPR's Vice-Director until earlier this year, when she became the organization's Director of Communications and Science Outreach.

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Links

[1] <https://www.cienciapr.org/en/blogs/equipo-informa/meet-our-director-science-education-programs-and-community-partnerships> [2] <https://www.cienciapr.org/en/user/moefeliu> [3] <https://www.cienciapr.org/en/monthly-story/scientists-educators-and-students-collaborating-rebuild-and-transform-science> [4] <https://www.cienciapr.org/en/blogs/equipo-informa/introducing-new-cienciapr-board-directors>