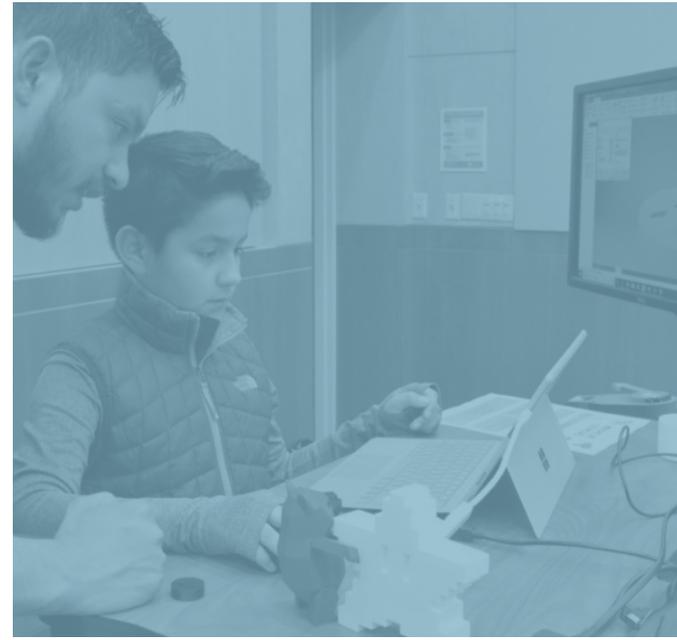




SHPE

**Leading Hispanics in STEM
Since 1973**





Introduction

Engineering in the Hispanic World goes back thousands of years. In Central America, the Aztecs and the Maya built large cities with awe-inspiring pyramids. In South America, the Inca built cities and roads high in the mountains. On the Iberian Peninsula, Roman, Arabic, North African, and Spanish engineers built aqueducts, churches, cities, and cathedrals. Today, SHPE carries on that legacy through its mission to change lives by empowering the Hispanic community and promoting science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) awareness, access, support, and development.

This timeline traces SHPE's history, from a dream to an internationally known and respected organization.

1973 Humble Beginnings

Frustrated by a lack of both career opportunities and professional support for Hispanic engineers, Rodrigo T. (Rod) Garcia, a member of the Los Angeles City Employees Chicano Association, held a meeting in his garage in East Los Angeles to discuss creating a new advocacy organization. The group discussed ways to boost minority representation in STEM, and shared their vision for improving Hispanic employment prospects. The conversation that took place there inspired the founding of SHPE.

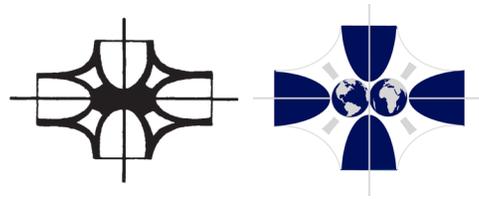


SHPE's original officers included (from left to right): Rodrigo Garcia, Americo Garza, George Esquer, Alex Vidaurrazga, and Andres Santamaria. *Credit: SHPE Magazine*



1974 SHPE is Formed

In 1974, SHPE was officially incorporated, its first office listed as a post office box in Los Angeles. Rod Garcia served as the first president of the organization, which initially focused its efforts in Southern California. Administrators, professors, and students at California State University, East Los Angeles College, and the University of Southern California founded SHPE's first collegiate chapters.



Jose Gonzalez, an East Los Angeles artist, developed SHPE's first logo (left) in 1974. Two years later, SHPE unveiled an updated logo that clearly showed both hemispheres, highlighting the connected nature of the Hispanic World.

Credit: SHPE

“We had a roster of all the engineers in California. And we went through it and picked out the Spanish surnames and sent them a solicitation. There were about 500 on the list, and we got 50 to join. That was the beginning.”

Rod Garcia, SHPE Founder

Contextual Event | 1974

As Rod Garcia and his cofounders laid the groundwork for SHPE, another group of engineers formed the Mexican American Engineering Society, today's MAES: Latinos in Science and Engineering, Inc. SHPE and MAES often collaborate and support each other.

1976 First Foundation Established

Hesitant to rely on government grants, SHPE actively solicited corporate donations. In 1976, SHPE leaders established the SHPE Foundation to raise money to support the organization's mission. The fundraising arm of SHPE has undergone several transformations since its establishment—in 2015, the foundation and SHPE, Inc. (the main organization) formally merged together to form one unified organization.



Raul Alvarado, Bill Nuanes, and Rod Garcia during a meeting of the SHPE Foundation's Board of Directors.

Credit: Career Communications Group, Inc. / Hispanic Engineer & IT magazine (www.HispanicEngineer.com)



1976 Fostering Corporate Partnerships

To better facilitate relations with its corporate partners, SHPE established the Executive Advisory Council. Although the council eventually folded, SHPE revived the concept in 1992 with the Industry Partnership Council. Relationships with companies like IBM have ensured funding for programs, networking opportunities for members, and insight into employer hiring practices and priorities. In the early 2000s, SHPE actively worked to reinvigorate these partnerships and grow the council.

A SHPE member speaks with a Microsoft recruiter during a SHPE conference. SHPE and its corporate partners connect the next generation of engineers with major employers in the field.

Credit: Alamy / Sylvia Buchholz



An early SHPE conference. In contrast to today's multiday events, the first conference took the form of a one-day seminar.

Credit: SHPE Magazine

1978 SHPE's First National Conference

SHPE's first national conference in Los Angeles, California set a precedent for the future, offering opportunities for networking and education. The conference grew and expanded in the coming years, and would soon be held annually in winter and early spring. The conferences have also helped to create, as former SHPE president Serafin Fernandez put it, a sense of "familia" in the organization.

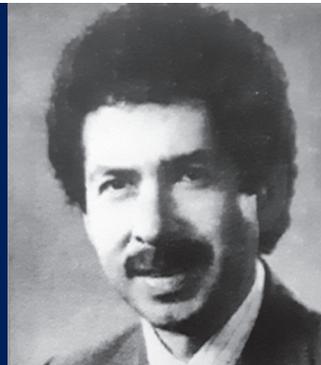


1982 New Directions with New Staff

Initially an all-volunteer organization, SHPE began professionalizing its operations when it hired a secretary and administrator. In 1982, SHPE cofounder Rod Garcia became SHPE's first executive director. In that position, he took on the responsibility of guiding SHPE's day-to-day operations.

SHPE cofounder Rod Garcia has served in many positions within the organization, including executive director, president, and SHPE Foundation board member.

Credit: SHPE Magazine



As part of the regionalization plan, members elected regional vice presidents and student representatives who would help SHPE make decisions. *Credit: SHPE Magazine*



1983 Empowering Regional Organizations

As SHPE grew, new chapters sprung up around the country. To empower these chapters, SHPE adopted a plan of regionalization. The national organization ceded power to individual chapters and allowed them to pursue initiatives and programs tailored to their specific needs. Regional representatives served on a national board that coordinated plans and policy for SHPE.

Contextual Event | 1984

In 1984 the first issue of *Hispanic Engineer* (later renamed *Hispanic Engineer and Information Technology*) went to print. The magazine is still in print today and is published by Career Communications Group, Inc.



1986 Training the Next Generation of Leaders

From its early days, SHPE has worked to foster not just great engineers, but great leaders. In 1986, SHPE hosted the National Student Leadership Development Seminar, designed to provide training and development for a new generation of leaders. The program was reorganized as the National Student Leadership Conference in 1991 and eventually evolved into the National Institute for Leadership Advancement.



Attendees of the 1991 National Student Leadership Conference. Today, SHPE offers leadership training programs for students and professional members.

Credit: SHPE Magazine



SHPE has worked to make its name known in Washington, D.C., so that it can advocate for its members and the broader Hispanic community in the highest levels of government. *Credit: Library of Congress*

1987 SHPE on Capitol Hill

“Today I will be testifying about the future,” the SHPE representative told the congressional committee. As a sign of the organization’s growing influence and reputation, Congress invited SHPE to testify about Hispanic employment. SHPE called for greater investment in Hispanic youth to ensure they had the tools and skills necessary to thrive in the modern workplace.

Contextual Event | 1989

In 1989, the first Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Conference (HENNAAC) was held. Several future SHPE leaders attended the conference and were inspired by the program. HENNAAC still exists today to honor and recognize the best and brightest Hispanic professionals in STEM.



1989 New Leadership

SHPE elected Margarita Colmenares to serve as the organization's president in 1989. The first woman to hold that role, Colmenares used her position to empower Hispanic students and ensure that SHPE remained committed to training the next generations of leaders. "We need to establish that every citizen, regardless of race or economic background, has the opportunity to reach their fullest potential," she declared during her inaugural address.

Colmenares delivers her inaugural address. After her term as SHPE's president, she went on to serve as a White House fellow and found a school in Antigua, Guatemala.

Credit: Career Communications Group, Inc. / Hispanic Engineer & IT magazine (www.HispanicEngineer.com)



"The reason we stay with SHPE, and I believe the reason that SHPE has survived and will continue to survive, is because of that element of Familia. And I hope we never forget that."

Serafin Fernandez, Former SHPE President

1992 Branching Out

In 1992, SHPE took another major step by hosting its conference outside of Los Angeles for the first time. This helped cement SHPE as a national organization, and laid the foundations for future conferences to occur all over the United States. Future conferences would employ paid consultants, another sign of the organization's professionalization.



1994

Clarifying the Mission

In 20 years, SHPE had grown from a small regional group to a truly national organization. In response, the organization adopted a mission that embraced and promoted further expansion. The mission statement read, "SHPE's mission is to promote the development of Hispanics in engineering, science and other technical professions to achieve educational excellence, economic opportunity and social equity." In the years since, SHPE has refined its mission statement. Today it reads, "SHPE changes lives by empowering the Hispanic community to realize its fullest potential and to impact the world through STEM awareness, access, support, and development."

Attendees of the 1994 SHPE National Career Conference.

Credit: Career Communications Group, Inc. / Hispanic Engineer & IT magazine (www.HispanicEngineer.com)



In this issue of Hispanic Engineer, SHPE President Melissa Villegas Drake announced the partnership.

Credit: Career Communications Group, Inc. / Hispanic Engineer & IT magazine (www.HispanicEngineer.com)

1995 An Official Magazine

To better promote its efforts, SHPE sought a partner that could serve as the official magazine of the organization. SHPE decided to work with *Hispanic Engineer* (known today as *Hispanic Engineer and Information Technology*). The partnership allowed SHPE to better promote its activities and remain connected to its members.



1996

Remember the Professionals

SHPE's membership includes students, civil servants, employees at firms, and entrepreneurs. In response to member concerns that the organization was prioritizing students, SHPE unveiled several new conference offerings for its professional members, including a track for members interested in starting their own engineering firms.

2004

An Intergalactic Partnership

Throughout its history, SHPE has collaborated with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) on several initiatives designed to promote Hispanic engagement in the aerospace industry. In 2004, NASA and SHPE hosted the National Academic Olympiad at SHPE's annual National Technical and Career Conference.

SHPE's membership has included many NASA employees. NASA engineer Guillermo Gonzalez helped establish SHPE's Southeast Virginia Professional Chapter.

Credit: NASA/David C. Bowman



1998 A Computer in Every School

Concerned by the growing digital divide in American schools and emboldened by President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore's call to connect all students to the internet, SHPE embarked on an ambitious effort to fix the technological imbalance. SHPE chapters—beginning with the professional chapter in San Jose, California, in 1996—began to donate their time and expertise to help connect schools in their area. In 1998, SHPE partnered with the AFL-CIO to bring new technology into schools across the country.



SHPE members pose with SHPE National Secretary and Net Day National Coordinator Jazmin Jonson (center).

Credit: Career Communications Group, Inc. / Hispanic Engineer & IT magazine (www.HispanicEngineer.com)



“During my tenure, we moved our National Conference from winter to the fall. Because of that move, our organization grew exponentially. Our members were getting jobs at a record pace.”

Diana Gomez, Former SHPE President

2007 The End of an Era

While the National Technology Career Conference, SHPE’s annual conference, had been a mainstay in the organization’s calendar for decades, by 2007 SHPE leaders realized that it was a time for a change. That year, two national conferences were held. One final winter conference in January 2007 and a new one in the fall (beginning in late October) to better coincide with corporate hiring trends. These changes represented a recentralization of the organization’s annual events and gave more power to the national organization.

2006 Working for Student Success

To further support its student members, SHPE opened a new office at the University of Texas at Arlington campus that would be dedicated solely to student programs. At this point, scholarships to students totaled up to \$500,000, a sign of both the organization’s fundraising abilities and commitment to young engineers.



The members of the Virginia Tech student chapter pose for a photograph at the 2019 SHPE National Convention. Student chapters continue to be a key part of the SHPE family.

Credit: VT SHPE



“During the recession our student numbers grew because when professionals are out of a job, they go back to school. So now we had older Latinos that were going back to school and joining SHPE. So we experienced growth because of the recession.”

Serafin Fernandez, Former SHPE President

2008 Recession & Recovery

While the 2008 recession sent shockwaves throughout the economy, it offered unexpected new opportunities for SHPE. Student chapters recruited new members as many unemployed workers went back to school. In response, SHPE worked to improve its career support services. SHPE's efforts paid off. Despite the economic hardships, SHPE numbered over 10,000 members in 2009, a new record.

2008 SHPE's First CEO

By 2008, SHPE was undergoing further professionalization. That year, the Board of Directors hired a full-time CEO, Enrique Gomez, to administer operations, shifting responsibility away from the board and president. In future years, the organization would continue to build a dedicated, full-time staff, hiring more personnel, and granting the CEO greater decision-making powers. Since Gomez's tenure, Pilar Montoya, Richard Morley, Barry Cordero, and Raquel Tamez have served as SHPE's CEO.



Enrique Gomez, SHPE's first CEO (center), poses with the SHPE-New York City Executive Board.

Credit: SHPE NYC



2014–2015 A New Structure

After years of discussion and debate, SHPE revised and reformed its governance structure, adopting a streamlined approach designed to run the organization like a business to provide professionalized services and support to its members. As part of this reorganization, SHPE Inc. and the SHPE Foundation merged. These efforts yielded dividends. By 2018, SHPE exceeded 230 active chapters.

2011 Promoting Empowerment

Only about 3% of all women involved in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) are Latinas. To promote Latina engagement in STEM, SHPE created a new track for its annual conference. Today, the SHPEtinias: Igniting Latinas in STEM program continues this effort.



SHPEtinias has helped many of SHPE's female members thrive in their careers. The current logo was created in 2018. *Credit: SHPE*



2019 New Designs for a New Decade

By the end of the 2010s, SHPE had more than 11,000 members spread out over 245 chapters nationwide. This influx of members propelled the organization to its largest conference ever, as over 9,000 participants registered for the 2019 SHPE National Convention. That year, SHPE also unveiled a new website to better serve its members and a new logo that reflects how the organization has changed and evolved in recent years.

In reflection of its evolution to include all of STEM, and its continued focus on students, SHPE dropped "Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers" from its official branding in 2019.

Credit: SHPE



2018 From Conference to Convention

SHPE's commitment to its members manifested in the decision to redesign its annual gathering. No longer just a conference, the 2018 event was a dedicated convention that featured five smaller conferences: Academic, Professionals in STEM, SHPEtinas, Tech & Innovation, and Pre-College.



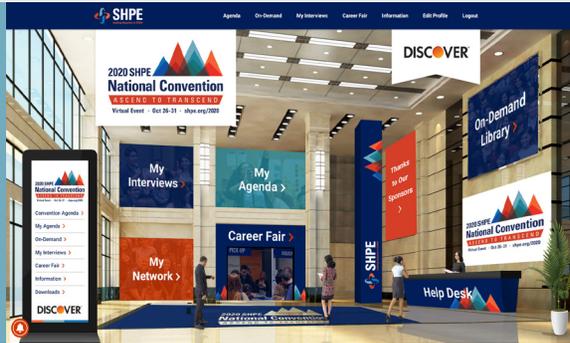
The exhibit floor of the 2018 convention.

Credit: SHPE



The 2020 National Convention had a virtual lobby that recreated the in-person convention experience in a digital space.

Credit: SHPE



2020 Taking the Convention Online

To ensure the safety of members and staff in the midst of the ongoing pandemic, SHPE moved its National Convention online. Nearly 9,000 people took part in the virtual convention in October 2020, and the multiday even received enthusiastic reviews from attendees. “I loved the virtual event this year!” wrote one participant. “Even though it wasn’t what anybody had in mind when we think ‘convention,’ I think it turned out for the better.

The SHPE team really did some astonishing work to ensure that we all had a great convention.”

2020 Finding New Opportunities in Unprecedented Times

As the COVID-19 pandemic took a tremendous economic and social toll on communities around the world, SHPE reacted quickly and moved all operations online. These efforts paid off—the organization fundraised more than \$800,000, enabling SHPE to continue to serve its members during a challenging time. In 2020, SHPE CEO Raquel Tamez and Board Chair Miguel Alemany also had the distinction of attending the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos as part of the first Hispanic delegation. SHPE was the only professional society represented in the delegation, which included a total of five organizations.



In October 2020, SHPE CEO Raquel Tamez virtually rang the NASDAQ Closing Bell in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month. The NASDAQ Marquee in Times Square that day featured images of SHPE members and chapters.

Credit: SHPE/NASDAQ

