2026 STAR AWARD CELEBRATIONS



EXCELLENCE IN STEM AWARDS LUNCHEON
Thursday, October 29, 11:45 am – 1:30 pm
Sagamore Ballroom (2nd Floor), Indiana Convention Center

STAR AWARDS GALA
Friday, October 30, 6:15 pm – 8:30 pm
Sagamore Ballroom (2nd Floor), Indiana Convention Center

SHPE
STAR Awards
SHPE Technical Achievement and Recognition

ABOUT THE
STAR AWARDS

SHPE proudly recognizes and celebrates its SHPE Technical Achievement and Recognition (STAR) Award recipients each year during the SHPE National Convention at the Excellence in STEM Awards Luncheon and the STAR Awards Gala.

These prestigious awards celebrate exceptional professionals and students whose dedication, commitment, and selfless efforts have advanced Hispanics in STEM careers. The STAR Awards also honor a company and a government agency that have demonstrated significant, measurable, and visible support for SHPE's mission and programs. Thank you for joining us at the National Convention as we celebrate the achievements of all our distinguished honorees!

Do you know someone who should be honored with a STAR Award? Please look for the nomination application in early Spring. If you would like further details, please email **starawards@shpe.org.**

→ EXCELLENCE IN STEM AWARDS LUNCHEON PROGRAM

→ STAR AWARDS GALA PROGRAM

→ EXCELLENCE IN STEM AWARDS LUNCHEON

AGENDA

WELCOME

Educator Achievement Award - Higher Education

Outstanding Chapter Advisor Award

Community Service Award

Innovator Award

Entrepreneur Award

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Award

Star of Today Award - Government

Executive Achievement Award - Government

Young Investigator Award

Government Agency of the Year

Hispanic ERG of the Year

HONOREES



Educator Achievement Award - Higher Education

DR. MARIO CRISTIÁN GAEDICKE HORNUNG

California State University, East Bay

Dr. Cristián Gaedicke has built his career around opening pathways into engineering and helping students thrive once they arrive. As Professor and Chair of the School of Engineering at California State University, East Bay, he leads programs serving more than 600 students and has helped drive a 38% increase in undergraduate enrollment. He has secured more than $1.5 million for STEM education initiatives supporting Hispanic, first-generation, and underrepresented students across the Bay Area. A longtime SHPE leader, mentor, researcher, and educator, Dr. Gaedicke has spent more than a decade expanding access to hands-on STEM experiences and creating opportunities for the next generation of engineers.



Outstanding Chapter Advisor Award

ANALÍA RAO

University of California, Irvine

Analía Rao believes student leadership flourishes when young people are given both agency and consistent support. As advisor to SHPE at UC Irvine, she has helped transform the chapter by expanding professional opportunities, strengthening corporate and campus partnerships, and removing financial barriers to participation. Under her guidance, her chapter's participation in the SHPE National Convention has more than doubled, with student attendance fully funded. She has also helped establish sustainable sponsorships, graduate programming, mentorship, and stronger connections with faculty and industry. Through it all, Analía remains what every student leader needs most - a trusted advocate genuinely invested in their success.



Community Service Award

ROBERTO TERAN JR.

Ford Motor Company

For Roberto Teran Jr., service means showing up and stepping up whenever someone needs a hand. A longtime Ford engineer, Roberto has brought that spirit to his Detroit community for decades. Since 2002, he has led Ford's annual Clark Park volunteer effort, growing it to more than 150 volunteers and helping sustain the program even through challenging industry downturns. His commitment extends from more than 30 years supporting Operation Good Cheer to mentoring young people through Scouting, robotics competitions, and volunteering with the Miracle League of Plymouth. Whether solving engineering challenges or serving his neighbors, Roberto leads with generosity, consistency, and a simple willingness to help.



Innovator Award

JOE CASTINADO SR.

Bank of America

For Joe Castinado, innovation starts with a “What if?” As Head of Strategy, Architecture and Innovation for Bank of America’s Global Operations Technology, Shared Services and Client Data Platforms, Joe designs secure, enterprise-scale solutions spanning AI, automation, data protection, and emerging technologies. Over 17 years at Bank of America, he has become one of the company’s most prolific inventors, holding 199 active patents while coaching colleagues to develop innovations of their own. A proud advocate for Latinos in technology and longtime SHPE supporter, Joe believes great ideas can come from anywhere. And he works to ensure more people see themselves as inventors.



Entrepreneur Award

JAIME M. LEIJA

EmeraNova

Jaime Leija believes entrepreneurship can build companies and improve lives. As Co-Founder, President, and CEO of EmeraNova, he has helped grow the company into a nationally recognized biotechnology organization advancing tissue restoration and regenerative medicine. Under his leadership, EmeraNova has expanded advanced wound care technologies, invested in clinical research, and explored emerging solutions including AI-powered diagnostics and regenerative products. Beyond EmeraNova, Jaime mentors future business leaders and supports underserved youth through his family's nonprofit foundation. His entrepreneurial leadership reflects a commitment to turning ambitious ideas into meaningful opportunities for patients, professionals, and communities alike.



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Award

SANDRA RUIZ BARBOSA FEITOSA

Honeywell Technologies

Sandra Ruiz Barbosa Feitosa knows the power of seeing possibilities. A first-generation college graduate from Brazil, she built a 20+ year career at Honeywell and became the company's first Latina Chief Inclusion & Diversity Officer. In that role, Sandra embedded inclusion, accessibility, and belonging into Honeywell's global talent strategy while expanding employee networks from 10,000 to 25,000 members worldwide. She also championed Honeywell's multi-year partnership with SHPE, creating pathways to mentorship, scholarships, leadership development, and STEM careers. Today, Sandra continues building workplaces where people can contribute fully while helping the next generation pursue opportunities without limitations.



Star of Today Award – Government

JUAN A. DURAN

Sandia National Laboratories

Juan A. Duran has built a career where engineering excellence meets public service. As a Product Realization Team Lead at Sandia National Laboratories, he directs critical work on nuclear-safety components vital to national security. A mechanical / aerospace engineer with nearly a decade of dedicated service at Sandia, Juan is equally committed to cultivating the next generation of STEM leaders. Serving as Sandia's technical recruiting lead at his alma mater, UTEP, he has built vital bridges between academia and industry while mentoring students nationwide. A dedicated SHPE Lifetime Member, Juan proves that true success is measured by the opportunities we build for others.

HONOREES



Executive Achievement Award – Government

DR. ANDREW REGALADO

United States Navy

Dr. Andrew Regalado's Navy career is defined by a remarkable progression from enlisted sailor to senior military leader. Selected for the Navy's Seaman to Admiral–21 commissioning program early in his career, he went on to serve aboard nuclear submarines and ultimately command the Navy's Unmanned Undersea Vehicle Squadron ONE. Under his command, the squadron achieved pioneering undersea operations, including the first successful deployment of unmanned undersea vehicles from a deployed submarine. Today, Dr. Regalado serves as Deputy Director within the Office of the Naval Inspector General, bringing more than 25 years of service, engineering expertise, and a commitment to developing the people and teams around him.



Young Investigator Award

JENNIFFER BUSTILLOS

GE Aerospace

Dr. Jenniffer Bustillos is helping shape the materials that will power the future of flight. As a Lead Research Engineer at GE Aerospace, she uses nanoscale microscopy and materials characterization to advance next-generation aerospace technologies, from additive manufacturing to rotor alloys. Originally from Guayaquil, Ecuador, Jenniffer earned her Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from Cornell University and has already authored more than 20 technical papers. Her research has also contributed to multiple patents, including a licensed graphene-based deicing technology. Beyond the laboratory, Jenniffer serves as President of GE Aerospace's Hispanic and Latino Alliance, pairing scientific discovery with a commitment to representation, mentorship, and opportunity.



DENVER
PARKS & RECREATION

Government Agency of the Year

CITY OF DENVER

Division of Parks and Recreation

Denver Parks & Recreation has been an invaluable partner in launching SHPE's new pre-college program, Club de Ciencias, helping expand access to engaging STEM experiences for local youth. From recruiting students and providing welcoming facilities to integrating the program into existing summer offerings, their team helped create the conditions for a successful launch. Staff at Montclair Recreation Center went above and beyond, regularly supporting facilitators and fostering a positive environment for students. The response from families spoke volumes, with parents already asking when the program would return. Through collaboration, hospitality, and a shared commitment to educational opportunity, Denver Parks & Recreation is helping inspire the next generation of STEM leaders.

¡GENTE!

COMMUNITY | CONNECTION | CULTURE

A SoCalGas® Employee Resource Group

Hispanic ERG of the Year

¡GENTE! – SOCALGAS

SoCalGas

At SoCalGas, ¡GENTE! - the Gas Employees Network Toward Empowerment - turns community, culture, and connection into meaningful action. One of the company's largest ERGs, its 660 members create opportunities for employees to grow, lead, celebrate their heritage, and give back. ¡GENTE! launched SoCalGas' first ERG-led mentorship program, which grew from 66 participants in 2022 to 166 in 2025 and inspired other ERGs to follow its model. Beyond the workplace, members have contributed more than 3,600 volunteer hours and raised over $61,000 to help students pursue higher education. Together, ¡GENTE! is building stronger careers, communities, and pathways for the next generation.

AGENDA

WELCOME

Role Model Award - Undergraduate

Role Model Award - Graduate

Role Model Award - Professional

Managerial Excellence Award - Corporate

Star of Tomorrow Award - Corporate

Star of Today Award - Corporate

Executive Achievement Award - Corporate

Dr. Ellen Ochoa Award

Rubén Hinojosa STEM Champion Award

Academic Institution of the Year

Company of the Year

Rodrigo Garcia Founder's Award

Jaime Oaxaca Award



Role Model Award - Undergraduate

GRECIA PAOLA SIONO GUTIERREZ

University of California, San Diego

Growing up in Mexicali, Mexico, Grecia Paola Siono Gutierrez dreamed of becoming an engineer and creating opportunities for others to follow. Now an Electrical Engineering graduate of UC San Diego, Grecia has supported NASA's Artemis program as a Blue Origin intern, conducted research in semiconductors and machine learning, and earned the prestigious Brooke Owens Fellowship. As Co-President of SHPE at UC San Diego, she led a chapter serving approximately 200 members while expanding technical training and graduate-school opportunities. Currently working in semiconductor sales at GlobalFoundries, Grecia aims to pursue a Ph.D. and bridge the gap between industry and academia, using her combined background to mentor students and empower future generations of Latino engineers.



Role Model Award - Graduate

KAYLA SKYE FERICY

Duke University

Kayla Skye Fericy believes engineering can improve health, strengthen communities, and expand opportunity. A Ph.D. candidate in Civil and Environmental Engineering at Duke University, her research explores antimicrobial resistance, water quality, and environmental surveillance to help prevent healthcare-associated infections. Her impact reaches well beyond the lab. Kayla represented Duke at COP29, has led international programs in Uganda and Oxford, and mentors young engineers through FIRST Robotics. Within SHPE, she has served as Regional Graduate Representative, National Graduate Committee Chair, and founding president of Duke GradSHPE, championing greater support and opportunity for Latine graduate students in STEM.



Role Model Award - Professional

SUSANA DIANA SAMAYOA

BAE Systems Inc.

Susana Diana Samayoa has built her career at the intersection of technical excellence, leadership, and service. As a Senior Systems Engineer at BAE Systems, she has received 7 Impact Awards spanning 3 business sectors and spearheaded complex aerospace and defense initiatives, notably serving as a Flight Test Director for international operations in France. Her career also includes work on high-impact programs at SpaceX and Northrop Grumman, while earning a Master of Engineering from Cornell University. As President of the SHPE Austin Professional Chapter, Susana champions professional development and dedication, earning SHPE Region 5's 2025 Outstanding Lobo Professional Award for her professional excellence, leadership, and community impact.



Managerial Excellence Award - Corporate

ÓSCAR MARTÍNEZ BAILAC

HP Inc.

For more than 30 years at HP, Óscar Martínez Bailac has proven that great leadership is measured not only by what teams accomplish, but by how people grow along the way. Today, he leads more than 30 multidisciplinary engineers advancing microfluidics and printing technologies across the globe. His career includes 15 U.S. patents, 12 published technical papers, and decades of R&D innovation. Yet Óscar's greatest impact may be the people he champions. Through HP's partnership with SHPE, he has mentored emerging talent, created career pathways, and helped 230 interns build confidence, connections, and career readiness.



Star of Tomorrow Award - Corporate

GIORDANO BENITEZ TORRES

Lenovo

Giordano Benítez Torres began his journey from Panama to the U.S. with a competitive full-ride scholarship and a passion for technology. Today, as North America Quality Program Manager at Lenovo, he tackles complex technical challenges for major customers while leading AI initiatives that improve quality and have helped generate millions in annual savings. Recognized by Hispanic Executive as a 30 Under 30 honoree, Giordano also serves as Lenovo's SHPE liaison and helps develop Latino professionals through the company's HOLA employee resource group. His mission is full circle as he turns the opportunities he received into pathways for those coming next.



Star of Today Award - Corporate

MONICA AMADO VILLAMIZAR

Dow Chemical Company

For Monica Amado Villamizar, science is a tool for building a more sustainable future. As a Research Scientist in Dow's Life Cycle Assessment Center of Expertise, she translates complex environmental data into decisions that advance industrial decarbonization. Monica served as lead LCA practitioner supporting Dow's Path to Zero hydrocarbon cracker investment, the company's largest decarbonization capital project. A chemical engineer with a Ph.D. in Environmental Sciences, she has built a career spanning research, industry, and academia across Colombia and Europe. Monica also champions Hispanic professionals through Dow's Hispanic and Latin Network, connecting technical excellence with culture, mentorship, and service.



Executive Achievement Award - Corporate

ANA SIMONATO

Chevron

Across more than 25 years in the energy industry, Ana Simonato has built a career at the intersection of innovation, business transformation, and people leadership. As Chevron's Argentina Country Manager, she leads the company's business in Argentina and helps advance its long-term growth in Vaca Muerta, one of the world's most important unconventional energy resources. A chemical engineer and U.S. patent holder, Ana's career has spanned petroleum engineering, unconventional development, technology, multi-billion-dollar capital programs, organizational transformation, and executive leadership across the United States and Argentina. At the heart of her leadership is a commitment to developing others. Ana mentors and sponsors emerging leaders and champions Hispanic representation in STEM and leadership. She believes leadership is measured not only by the results we deliver, but by the opportunities we create for others to grow, lead, and succeed.



Dr. Ellen Ochoa Award

SUELLEN CRISTINA DOS SANTOS FRANK

The Boeing Company

From a small industrial town in Brazil to the forefront of aerospace innovation, Suellen Cristina dos Santos Frank has built her career around the belief that engineering can create a safer, more sustainable world. Today, she is Boeing Commercial Airplanes' first and only Technical Fellow dedicated to Sustainability, providing leadership across sustainable materials, green chemistry, environmental stewardship, and aerospace innovation. A first-generation graduate and Ph.D. candidate in Sustainable Engineering at Villanova University, Suellen pairs technical achievement with a deep commitment to mentorship and representation, creating opportunities for students and emerging professionals while inspiring the next generation of Hispanic engineers.



Rubén Hinojosa STEM Champion Award

LINDA RENTERIA (POSTHUMOUS)

Casa Sanchez Foods

For nearly four decades, Linda Renteria helped build the SHPE Familia while creating opportunities for generations to follow. A civil engineer, business leader, educator, and SHPE Lifetime Member, Linda served as National Secretary, led the San Francisco Chapter, and spent decades mentoring students and expanding access to STEM education. She brought that same spirit of service to her academic career, and Casa Sanchez Foods, where she served as COO and owner. Even while pursuing a doctorate in educational leadership, Linda continued giving back. Her legacy lives in the countless students, colleagues, friends, and Familia members she lifted along the way.

Academic Institution of the Year

DREXEL UNIVERSITY

At Drexel University, supporting Hispanic students in STEM means giving them the resources and the confidence to lead. Over the past five years, Drexel's Howley College of Engineering & Computing has expanded its commitment through dedicated inclusion leadership, student recognition, industry conversations, and renewed investment in SHPE. Faculty, staff, and alumni have been instrumental in revitalizing the Drexel SHPE Chapter, consistently stepping up with guidance, resources, and connections to STEM outreach opportunities in Philadelphia's Hispanic community. Most importantly, Drexel empowers students to take ownership of what comes next while encouraging emerging leaders to strengthen SHPE's presence on campus and build a community where future engineers can thrive.



Company of the Year

BECHTEL

At Bechtel, we want more people to see the possibilities of a career in engineering and construction. Through partnerships with organizations such as SHPE, Bechtel supports recruiting, mentorship, professional development, and STEM outreach that introduce students and professionals to opportunities across the industry. This includes support for SHPE university chapters and programs such as Noche de Ciencias and SHPEtinas, as well as opportunities for Bechtel employees to mentor, lead, and give back. Bechtel also works with diverse suppliers and small businesses to broaden opportunity across the communities where we live and work. Together, these efforts help build greater awareness of career pathways in engineering and construction and connect more people with opportunities in the industry.



Rodrigo Garcia Founder's Award

MICHAEL EDWARD GUTIERREZ

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics

For more than two decades, Michael Gutierrez has helped build the SHPE Familia through servant leadership, mentorship, and an unwavering commitment to its mission. A SHPE Lifetime Member, Michael has served as Region 5 Vice President, National Treasurer, National Board Director, and Vice Chair, helping strengthen the organization's governance and financial future. He also founded the SHPE at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Fort Worth Professional Chapter and has connected hundreds of Hispanic engineering students with careers in aerospace and defense. A senior engineering leader at Lockheed Martin, Michael has spent more than 28 years proving that true leadership is measured by how many others you help succeed.



Jaime Oaxaca Award

MINDY ROSE FARRELL

Sandia National Laboratories

Mindy Farrell has built her career around a simple question - How do we get there together? A first-generation college graduate and electrical engineer, Mindy now serves as an Acting Level 1 Manager at Sandia National Laboratories, bringing 13 years of experience across engineering, manufacturing, operations, and systems integration. Her impact extends deeply into SHPE, where she has served as Region 3 Vice President and, since 2021, President of the New Mexico Chapter. She has grown membership and corporate participation by more than 300%! Through mentorship, inclusive leadership, and an unwavering belief in others, Mindy creates opportunities for people to learn, lead, and succeed together.

Respect, support, develop

All in on aerospace. All in on you.



At Honeywell Aerospace we respect, support and develop each other across functions, borders and backgrounds because our best work happens when everyone belongs.

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INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL
















































































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Donate Today to Change a Life Tomorrow!

Financial need is a primary reason why Hispanic students do not complete a bachelor's degree.

With over 1,800 scholarships awarded and over $7.2 million invested, SHPE is actively increasing access to STEM education.

Your donation today will change the life of a scholar and their family.

SHPE
Leading Hispanics in STEM.

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OCTOBER 6-9, 2027

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