



39 Years of Advancing Hispanics/Chicanos & Native Americans in Science

[CREATE ACCOUNT](#)

[LOG IN](#)

[SEARCH](#)

[DONATE NOW](#)
Support our Mission!

SACNAS Honors Six Leaders in Science Research, Mentoring, Teaching



(http://sacnas.org/sites/sacnas.civicrm.net/files/imagecache/wysiwyg_imageupload_lightbox_preset/wysiwyg_imageupload/12/sacnas-logo.jpg)

CONTACT: Jenny Kurzweil, SACNAS Communications Dept. (831) 459-0170, ext. 227

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Santa Cruz, CA

SACNAS ([Society for Advancement of Hispanics/Chicanos & Native Americans in Science \(/about\)](#)), a national nonprofit organization leading the nation in diversifying the scientific workforce for 39 years, announces the six recipients of the **2012 SACNAS Distinguished Awards**. Each award commends the recipient for his or her exemplary scientific achievement, teaching and mentorship of underrepresented minority science students.

Award recipients will be honored for their dedication to SACNAS' mission of fostering the success of Hispanic/Chicano and Native American scientists at a ceremony on October 11, 2012 at the SACNAS National Conference in Seattle, Washington. SACNAS President, Ernest Márquez, PhD, and SACNAS Executive Director, Tina Garza, PhD, will present the awards.

Since the [SACNAS Distinguished Awards \(/about/how-we-work/honors/distinguished\)](#) program was initiated in 1997, the Society has honored 84 scientists, educators, and program directors for their commitment to and personification of the spirit of the SACNAS mission: to assist Hispanic/Chicano and Native American scientists, from college students to professionals, to attain advanced degrees, careers, and positions of leadership in science.

2012 Distinguished Scientist Award

**Miguel José Yacamán, PhD**

Professor and Department Chair, Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Texas at San Antonio

Dr. Miguel Yacamán's research focuses on the structure and properties of nanoparticles, including metals, semiconductors, and magnetic materials. He has also worked on the synthesis and characterization of nanoparticles, defects in solids, electron diffraction and imaging theory, quasicrystals, archaeological materials, catalysis, and physics and chemistry of carbon.

The author of nine books and over 450 technical papers, he has served as associate editor for several professional journals. Dr. Yacamán has held the Guggenheim Fellowship and been awarded numerous prizes, including the National Science Prize of Mexico. He is considered one of the pioneers in nanotechnology with publications on this topic dating back to the seventies. More than 50 PhD and MS students have graduated under Dr. Yacamán; his lab has hosted more than 100 postdoctoral researchers and visiting professors.

Dr. Yacamán has also been active in graduate student recruitment and retention. Under his leadership, UTSA developed a joint physics doctoral program with UT Brownsville, which has a very high proportion of underrepresented minority students. He coordinated the development of the NSF-funded PREM program, which seeks to train underrepresented minority students from south Texas in laboratories at UTSA and Northwestern University. He also developed an RCMI-NIH program for developing nanotechnology in minority-serving institutions.

2012 Distinguished Undergraduate Institution Mentor Award

(http://sacnas.org/sites/sacnas.civicrm.net/files/imagecache/wysiwyg_imageupload_lightbox_preset/wysiwyg_imageupload/12/camacho_erika_photo.jpg)

Erika T. Camacho, PhD

Assistant Professor, Division of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, Arizona State University

Dr. Erika T. Camacho received her PhD in Applied Mathematics from Cornell University in 2003. She spent a year as a postdoctoral research associate at Los Alamos National Laboratory, and held a tenure-track position at Loyola Marymount University before joining the faculty at Arizona State University (ASU) in 2007.

Dr. Camacho's passion is to continue the work and legacy of her mentors, including high school math teacher Jaime Escalante, in creating educational opportunities for individuals from marginalized communities. She involves students in her work at the interface of mathematics and its applications to biology and sociology. Her leadership, scholarship, and mentoring have won her national recognition: the National Hispanic Women Corporation 2011 Latina Leadership Award; Diverse: Issues in Higher Education Emerging Scholars of 2010; a U.S. National Security Agency citation for mentoring and guiding undergraduates in research; and the 2011 ASU Faculty Women's Association Outstanding Faculty Mentoring Award.

Dr. Camacho's lifelong journey is to diversify the landscape of the field of mathematics, and she has made extensive contributions in service and outreach. Her service includes: Diversity Advisory Committees (SIAM); Advisory Boards (IPC, CURM); and the Mathematics Task Force (SACNAS). She has been profiled in Univisión Nightly News, SIAM News, State Press, SACNAS News, and Latino Perspectives Magazine.

2012 Distinguished Tribal College Mentor Award



(http://sacnas.org/sites/sacnas.civicrm.net/files/imagecache/wysiwyg_imageupload_lightbox_preset/wysiwyg_imageupload/12/condon_sharon_photo.JPG)

Ms. Sharon Condon, MA

Acting Dean of Humanities & Co-Investigator RISE Grant, Haskell Indian Nations University

Ms. Sharon Condon has worked at Haskell Indian Nations University for over 25 years; she teaches Communication Studies, but is frequently asked to take other responsibilities because she is known to get things done. She developed and served as director of Haskell's first Academic Advising Center, and later became Chair of Humanities. In the 1990s, Ms. Condon developed and implemented a National Training Center at Haskell serving the entire Bureau of Indian Affairs. From 1998 to 2006, she resumed her faculty responsibilities while also serving as departmental chair; this past year, she is Acting Dean of Humanities. She began working on the NIH RISE grant at Haskell in 2002 as an internal evaluator and then became a co-investigator of RISE.

Ms. Condon received the American Indian College Fund Teaching Excellence Award, and the 2007 Haskell Faculty Senate Outstanding Faculty award. Her list of publications and presentations, including one at an international conference in Verona, Italy, is indeed impressive for a faculty member at a tribal college, given its onerous teaching load

Ms. Condon works closely with students as both advisor and mentor to ensure their success at Haskell and beyond. Her career is dedicated to making a difference in the lives of young, talented Native American students.

2012 Distinguished Community College Mentor Award



(http://sacnas.org/sites/sacnas.civicrm.net/files/imagecache/wysiwyg_imageupload_lightbox_preset/wysiwyg_imageupload/12/romero_octavio_photo.jpg)

Mr. Octavio Pierre Romero, MA (Cherokee)

Counselor, San Diego Mesa College

Octavio Pierre Romero was born in Tijuana, Mexico, son of a Mexican father and Cherokee mother. Mr. Romero received his AA and went on to receive two BAs, in History and Geography, and a minor in American Indian Studies from California State University, Northridge (CSUN).

In 1987, he began his graduate career at San Diego State University (SDSU) in the Department of American Indian Studies. While studying post-secondary teaching there, Mr. Romero was the first contact for students in American Indian Studies classes, and was inspired to pursue a career in higher education and counseling.

In 1991, after Mr. Romero began working at San Diego Mesa College in the Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS), he earned an MA in Educational Counseling. In 1996, he fulfilled his goal to support and mentor students by becoming a counselor in EOPS at Mesa college. This program works with first generation, unrepresented, and at-risk students. Because he knows firsthand their struggles, Octavio has assisted and mentored hundreds of students to reach their life goals.

In 2006, American Indian students asked him to serve as advisor for a local SACNAS chapter. Since then, SACNAS has sponsored events, such as Native American Heritage month, that provide opportunities to recruit and support American Indian students. In 2011, SACNAS brought over 75 American Indian K-12 students to the campus for an evening of Native Dance, and exposure to higher education and STEM majors.

2012 Distinguished Professional Mentor Award



(http://sacnas.org/sites/sacnas.civicrm.net/files/imagecache/wysiwyg_imageupload_lightbox_preset/wysiwyg_imageupload/12/woodin_terry_photo.JPG)

Terry Woodin, PhD

Program Officer, Division of Undergraduate Education of the Directorate for Education and Human Resources, National Science Foundation

As a Program Officer for the NSF, Dr. Terry Woodin is part of the four-agency (NIH, NSF, HHMI, USDA) Vision and Change effort to improve undergraduate education in biology. She earned her Masters and PhD in Biochemistry at the University of California, Davis and began her professional career in the Biochemistry Department at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR). She is a lifetime member of SACNAS, a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and is on the Editorial Board of the Journal of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology.

Throughout her academic career, Dr. Woodin has believed there is no excellence without diversity—that if this nation hopes to stay preeminent in science, engineering, and mathematics it must take advantage of the diversity of our population, and vigorously recruit students from groups currently underrepresented in the sciences. She continued to hold these views as she helped establish high school and undergraduate summer research programs, the women's reentry program in computer science, and EPSCoR program for women faculty at UNR. Each year she hosts students from WINS, HACU, or GEM summer research programs. These students have gained

experience at the NSF and have gone on to earn degrees in and to work in the sciences.

2012 Distinguished Service to the Society Award



(http://sacnas.org/sites/sacnas.civicrm.net/files/imagecache/wysiwyg_imageupload_lightbox_preset/wysiwyg_imageupload/12/nededog_arlene_photo.JPG)

Ms. Arlene Nededog, MEd (Chamarro)

Director of Undergraduate Retention Programs, College of Natural Sciences, Colorado State University

Ms. Arlene Nededog was raised in a multi-racial military family, traveling across the United States and living in Japan. She earned a BA in Social Work and an MEd, specializing in College Student Personnel Administration. Influenced by her upbringing, she has focused on working with students of color, women, and other underrepresented populations.

Ms. Nededog's long career includes working with TRIO programs: Talent Search Coordinator, Northern Arizona University (NAU), and Upward Bound Counselor, Colorado State University (CSU), providing guidance and career counseling to diverse students. At the Minority Student Resource Center at NAU, she coordinated student services for recruitment and retention; at the HELP/Success Center at CSU, she supervised advising services for undeclared students and for students interested in declaring engineering and the natural sciences.

For 10 years she has served as Director of Undergraduate Retention Programs in the College of Natural Sciences (CNS) at CSU. She provides experiential learning activities for undergraduates and develops connections between students and faculty. Through Students as Leaders in Science, SACNAS CSU Chapter, CNS Ambassadors, and the new CNS Mentoring program, she has helped students become global leaders in the sciences. At the Colorado Alliance for Minority Participation, Ms. Nededog coaches students in leadership skills, and encourages participation in undergraduate research and attendance at professional conferences. She is actively involved in campus and community diversity training.

Related Resources

[SACNAS Distinguished Awards](#) (/about/how-we-work/honors/distinguished)

[SACNAS Announcements](#) (/news)

[2012 SACNAS National Conference](#) (<https://sacnas.org/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=42>)

[About SACNAS](#) (/about)