

Candidate Profiles

Summer Internship Program

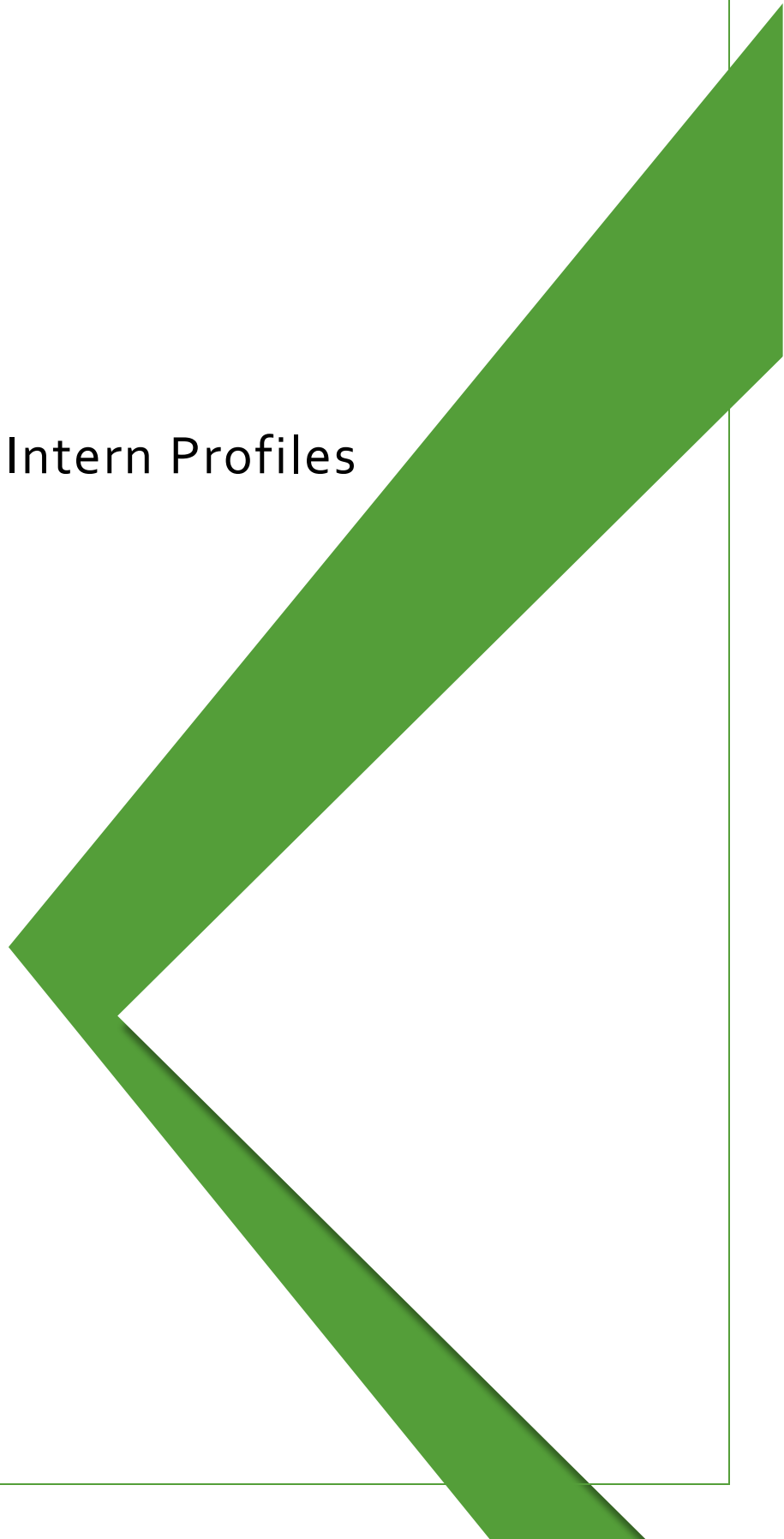
2018



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2018 USDA-NRCS Intern Profiles





Josue Aceituno

(pronounced: Haw-suu-way [Ah-say-too-no](#))

Municipality of Origin in Puerto Rico or State in the US: Aguas Buenas, Puerto Rico

Phone: 787-392-6889

Email: josue.aceituno@upr.edu; j.aceitunodiaz@gmail.com

College Major: Soil science, Agricultural Sciences

Graduation Date: December 2019

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico- Mayagüez Campus.

Personal, educational and work highlights: I graduated with a B.S. in geology in 2014, worked for the NEON project and Caduceus Healthcare after graduating. I went back to college in 2017 to finish a second bachelor's in agricultural sciences. I am extremely proud of the decision to come back and finish a second bachelor's, because for a long time I felt that this is what I am meant to do.

Career Goals: I would love to have a career in soil conservation and be able to obtain a stable job where I can incorporate fresh ideas and new techniques related to soil conservation. I feel that soil conservation would benefit a lot from applying the field of landscape architecture to their techniques, so I would love to be able to incorporate ideas and techniques from that field to soil conservation.

Interesting Facts about you: I love photography, especially landscape and nature photography. I took an online course just to learn basics and have taken quite a few photos that I love. I am kind of a geeky kid in an adult body. I love anime, comics and everything superhero.



Jesus Obed Adorno-Pagán

Municipality of Origin in Puerto Rico or State in the US:
Quebradillas, Puerto Rico

Phone: 787-517-3832

Email: jesus.adorno@upr.edu

College Major: Mechanical Engineering, minor in Project Management

Graduation Date: May 2019

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico - Mayagüez Campus.

Personal, educational and work highlights: Something very important, both personally and academically, has been being part of the UPRM Moonbuggy Project Design. This is where I started to see that I really like what I study, also it gives me a lot of motivation to know that through this project I had the opportunity to represent my university and island. While being part of that project we gave to our university and island a worldwide achievement when we won the third place overall in the college division in the past competition at U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, AL.

Career Goals: My goals are to graduate as an engineer and in the future to study a master's degree in aerospace engineering.

Interesting Facts about you: I like music a lot and I enjoy playing sports in my spare time.



Pedro Ayala-Ortiz

Municipality of Origin in Puerto Rico or State in the US: Las Piedras, Puerto Rico

Phone: 787-692

Email: pedro.ayala@upr.edu

College Major: Agribusiness and Agriculture Engineering

Graduation Date: May 2020

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico- Mayagüez Campus.

Personal, educational and work highlights: Eagle Scout. Currently pursuing a double degree in the field of Agriculture, Agribusiness and Agriculture Engineering, with work experience in chemical distribution and handling.

Career Goals: To be able to work in a position in which my leadership skills can be fully appreciated.

Interesting Facts about you: My passion for working in a nature related field comes from my many years as a boy-scout and my hobby to photograph life.



Jowin E. Hernández-Abrams

Municipality of Origin in Puerto Rico or State in the US: Isabela, Puerto Rico

Phone: 787-560-5294

Email: jowin.hernandez@upr.edu

College Major: Agricultural Science; Agricultural Extension

Graduation Date: June 2019

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico - Mayagüez Campus.

Personal, educational and work highlights: Fourth-year Agricultural Extension undergrad with Bayer Crop Science internship experience. Bilingual, Spanish as my native language and fluent in advanced level English. Skills in small engine mechanics and agricultural field work.

Career Goals: Work experience that would enable me to put in practice my academic preparation in Agricultural Extension, where I can increase training experience and develop skills in addressing the needs of farmers.

Interesting Facts about you: Current 4-H Club UPRM Chapter member and previous high school orchestra band trumpet player.



Victor M. Laguer-Martínez

Municipality of Origin in Puerto Rico or State in the US: Aguadilla, Puerto Rico

Phone: 787-597-5331

Email: victor.laguer@upr.edu

College Major: Agribusiness

Graduation Date: June 2021

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico- Mayagüez Campus.

Personal, educational and work highlights: In 2015, I was selected to join the program Future Business Leaders of America in which consist in developing professional skills in accounting, merchandising and office systems. About my work experience I had work with a wholesale business called K-Van Distributors in which I was evolved in working with inventory, business notes, administrative duties, packing and distributing merchandise. Also, besides being a student in Agribusiness, I'm currently working in a music career as a player and composer working with music labels, bands, "batucadas" and music activities.

Career Goals: My career goal is to keep learning and expanding my knowledge to contribute and help my country. After finishing my undergraduate degree, I would like to pursue a PHD in Economics.

Interesting Facts about you: I'm a passionate student excited about learning, acquiring new experiences and helping people in need.



Javier Omar Medina-Sánchez

Municipality of Origin in Puerto Rico or State in the US: Yabucoa, Puerto Rico

Phone: 939-239-8013

Email: javier.medina8@upr.edu

College Major: Science, General Agriculture

Curricular Sequence:

- Natural Resources Conservation
- Plant Biosecurity

Graduation Date: June 2020

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico - Mayagüez Campus.

Personal, educational and work highlights: I consider my most important highlight being selected to participate of the USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum Student Diversity program in which I was selected among 20 undergraduate students from all around the United States. In the work area, my most considerable highlight would be being leader of over 50 individuals in the Horticulture Division of the Agricultural Fair "*Cinco Dias con Nuestra Tierra*" at the University of Puerto Rico Mayaguez Campus.

Career Goals: My career goals are to obtain knowledge in diverse areas of agriculture so that I can help as many people as possible achieve their goals in agriculture and in life. To achieve this, I would establish an Agriculture Education Institution which will be open to all ages so that society can learn the values and importance's that agriculture has in a nation economy.

Interesting Facts about you: I consider myself an entrepreneurial student with innovative ideas that can help the Agriculture Industry adapt and evolve as time goes by. One of my strongest abilities is being dedicated to my work, being creative and fixing problem while using critical thinking. I also considered myself a good team member because I always consider my team member's point of view and ideas about the topic and help develop them in further detail.



Sylvia S. Noriega-Luciano

Municipality of Origin in Puerto Rico or State in the US: Cabo Rojo, PR

Phone: (939)228-0197

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College Major: Animal Science, Agricultural Sciences

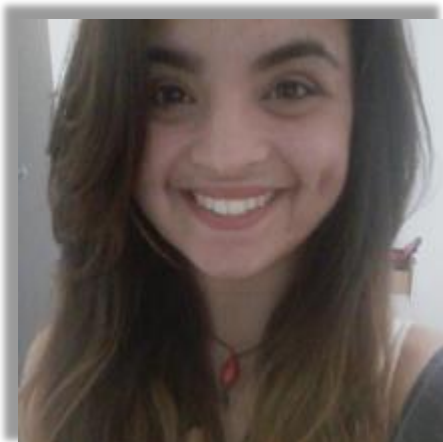
Graduation Date: May 2020

Educational Background: Puerto Rico - Mayagüez Campus.

Personal, educational and work highlights: I am part of the university's General Student Council and am President of the Agricultural Sciences Student Council. I was part of the Agricultural Educational Fair "*5 Días con Nuestra Tierra*" committee from 2016-2017.

Career Goals: My goal is to get both master and doctorate's degrees in Agricultural Sciences and become a professor.

Interesting Facts about you: I always do what I set my mind to and I can understand American Sign Language.



Mariemines Ortiz-Torres

Municipality of Origin in Puerto Rico or State in the US: Orocovis, Puerto Rico

Phone: 787-478-6410

Email: mariemines.ortiz@upr.edu

College Major: Agriculture Education (will begin a minor in Natural Resources Conservation)

Graduation Date: May 2021

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico - Mayagüez Campus.

Personal, educational and work highlights: The most important moments of my education since my high school are to be part of the FFA organization where I participated in oratory competitions where I learned how to be a leader and how to speak in public. Also, I have been recognized by my director for educating students out of the classroom in the agroecology project that I established. Also, my participation in the Slow Food Organization. They gave me the opportunity to travel to Italy, where I learned so much from people from around the world, regarding bringing together the areas of healthy food production and environmental protection.

Career Goals: When I graduate I want to start a project focused on teaching people interested in agroecology and how to use this method to produce food. Also, I want to be a person who is available to help those farmers that want to improve their own practices. I really want to be a person that motivates others to get involved in the field of agriculture.

Interesting Facts about you: One of the things that I like to do is to spend my time working in the vegetable garden that I have at home and taking care of my chickens. Also, I really like to get involved in associations related to agriculture because I think that this can help to expand my knowledge. The last interesting fact about me is my reason for loving agriculture. The reason being that I am really impressed with how nature can transform a pretty small seed into food, so I am amazed with the wonder of nature.



Angel Gabriel Padilla-Rivera

Municipality of Origin in Puerto Rico or State in the US: Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico

Phone: 939- 278-1055

Email: angel.padilla6@upr.edu

College Major: General Agriculture Sciences

Graduation Date: May 2020

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico- Mayagüez Campus.

Personal, educational and work highlights: I love working in the field, directly. That is why the educational interests that I have are guided more in crops protection, although agricultural education is another of my strengths. Currently, I work as a wildland firefighter for the US Fishing and wildlife service agency, for which I have worked in different aspects for about 5 years, highlighting having been a Americorp VISTA member.

Career Goals: I would like to obtain a career in a federal agency in the field of conservation, either for agricultural or natural resources.

Interesting Facts about you: I love to do aerial videos of landscapes and take macro photos.



Luis Antonio Pratts-Santiago

Municipality of Origin in Puerto Rico or State in the US: Camuy, Puerto Rico

Phone: (787)383-4671

Email: luis.pratts@upr.edu

College Major: Environment Agricultural Systems

Graduation Date: May 2019

Educational Background University of Puerto Rico - Mayagüez Campus.

- Courses in renewable energy, agro climatology and water and soil management
- Certificate in Environmental Sustainability
- Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design Certificate

Career Goals: Through my professional development, I wish to contribute all the knowledge acquired during my university years in the field of Agricultural Sciences. I hope to have experiences that contribute to my professional and personal growth, thus serving as an instrument to develop and promote the best practices and techniques of resource management, making this science more productive and responsible with our environment. As a goal, my commitment is to work hard with the purpose of guaranteeing to future generations the food safety they deserve, thus contributing to the perpetuation of the human race.

Interesting Facts about you: One interesting fact about me is that I enjoy doing outdoor activities; especially, those activities that involve nature like hiking, going to the river and camping in the forest.



Melanie Rivera-Barreto

Municipality of Origin in Puerto Rico or State in the US:
Barranquitas, Puerto Rico

Phone: 939-254-1503

Email: melanie.rivera26@upr.edu

College Major: Animal Science with Pre-veterinary

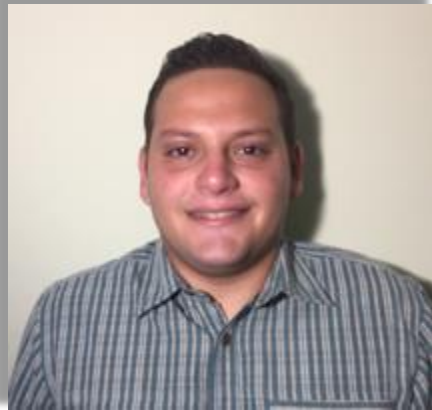
Graduation Date: May 2019

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico - Mayagüez Campus

Personal, educational and work highlights: I am currently volunteering for a master's research with Senepol Cattle, which has given me the opportunity for expanding my knowledge in the research field and the importance of it in our field. I have received merits in honor's ceremonies for my academic involvement, due to the devotion to my field of study by the College of Agronomists of Puerto Rico and the School of Veterinary Doctors of Puerto Rico. I'm part of the national honorary fraternity of agriculture Alpha Zeta, in which I continue to forge myself as a professional in the field; currently, I am part of the directive board, which has helped me enhance as a leader. Recently, I've worked as a volunteer in a mass sterilization with veterinarians from the U.S, I accomplish to help them as a veterinary assistant because of my good work, quick learning, and efficiency.

Career Goals: My goal is to become a veterinarian, more likely working with large animals. But also, always having in mind conservation of natural resources (would love to be able to combine those two interests in some way in my future).

Interesting Facts about you: Besides my interests in animal science, I consider myself a very artistic and outgoing person, since I like acting, painting, being outdoors making orchards and enjoying horseback riding, snorkeling, and jet skiing and more!



Rene Bradley Rivera-Cruz

Municipality of Origin in Puerto Rico or State in the US:
Mayaguez, Puerto Rico

Phone: 939-865-1757

Email: rene.rivera6@upr.edu

College Major: Animal Science

Graduation Date: December 2019

Educational Background University of Puerto Rico - Mayagüez Campus

Personal, educational and work highlights: During my university career I have been active in student educational associations such as "Cinco días con nuestra tierra", pre-vet association and "Ayudar esta de moda". All this is aimed at helping the agricultural sector and enhance environmental and social value. I am currently contributing to a research project on the nutrition of sick cows at the University of Puerto Rico- Mayagüez campus. Also, thanks to federal aid study and work of the university, I was accepted to work with the program Sea Grant PR. However, getting this internship with Nolo Consulting and NRCS, would be my biggest highlights so far.

Career Goals: Once I finish my studies I want to obtain a job where I can apply and develop the knowledge acquired at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez campus. Since high school I have wanted to work for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in agencies such as APHIS and NRCS. In the long term, I will apply to graduate and doctoral programs to help me contribute to agriculture and share the knowledge acquired.

Interesting Facts about you: I am an observer who likes to analyze situations before taking action and I am always willing to help with educational, agricultural, environmental protection and social issues.



Josecarlo Rivera-Villalobos

Municipality of Origin in Puerto Rico or State in the US: Ciales, Puerto Rico

Phone: 787-412-4085

Email: josecarlo.rivera@upr.edu

College Major: Agricultural Engineering, Agricultural & Environmental Systems (SAGA)

Graduation Date: May 2021

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico - Mayagüez Campus.

Personal, educational and work highlights: I am on my second year of a Degree in Agricultural Engineering. Experience in lab and field work. I have a strong interest in mathematics and problem optimization. Have participated in several conferences that focus on the coffee industry. I grew up in an agricultural environment and have worked with the coffee industry since 2015. My university education focused on new innovative ways to manage coffee production.

Career Goals: Obtain employment with a high-profile coffee roaster in the U.S. to visit coffee farms and help optimize their process and at the same time learn and manage other processes. Learn about the coffee culture in the world. After seeing how the coffee, start a Puerto Rican, private-owned coffee projects, that involve developing specialty farms and distributing to roasters all over the island.

Interesting Facts about you: I love mountain bike and enjoy the arts, good music, culinary arts. I love visiting coffee shops.



Luis Eduardo Roman-Quiñones

Municipality of Origin in Puerto Rico or State in the US: Ponce, Puerto Rico

Phone: 939-248-7150

Email: luis.roman10@upr.edu

College Major: Science in Civil Engineering

Graduation Date: May 2019

Educational Background:

- Attended one year to Ponce Vocational High School at Electronic Workshop, Ponce PR
- University of Puerto Rico- Mayagüez Campus.
- Relevant courses: Water Resources, Geotechnical Engineering, Project Management, Surveying, Structural Analysis, Science of Materials

Personal, educational and work highlights: I worked as assistant engineer in the biggest photovoltaic generating plants in the Caribbean, located in Isabela PR, named Oriana Energy I & II. I gained important field experience with soil treatments to construct and maintain. Also, I am fully committed to speaking and practicing full conversations in Spanish and English with anyone, as it is a daily practice in my current role as a server.

Career Goals: To always obtain successful results at the end of any project, research or study that involves my skills and analytical efficiency. In addition to expand and enrich my academic background with every experience obtained and use this for my benefit and for the benefit of the people working around me.

Interesting Facts about you: I always over-think about absolutely everything that happens throughout my day and try to find a solution for everything, no matter how difficult. I am very analytical.



Mario Antonio Velázquez

Municipality of Origin in Puerto Rico or State in the US: Gurabo, Puerto Rico

Phone: 787-220-0052

Email: mario.velazquez@upr.edu

College Major: Agricultural Science

Graduation Date: May 2019

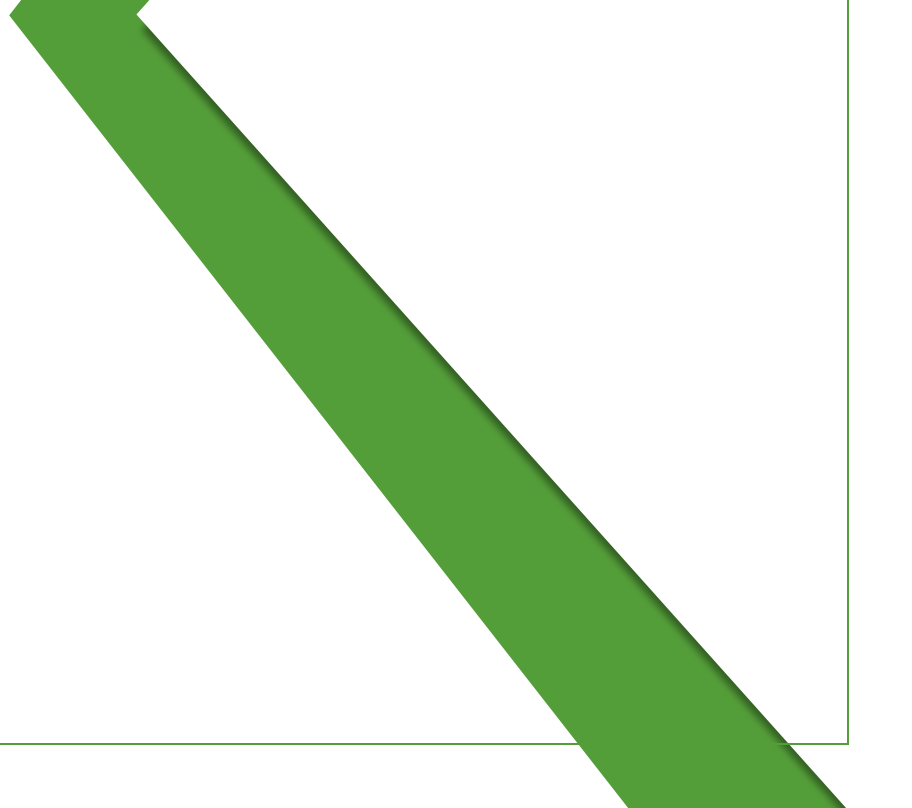
Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico - Mayagüez Campus.

Personal, educational and work highlights: I have worked in a Boy Scouts summer camp for several years, training and giving educational classes in different fields of nature that include forestry, geology, entomology, ornithology, herpetology, soil and water protection, plant science and weather. Part of this job requires planning and implementing different subject related field hikes for the audience to appreciate the organisms being discussed in their respective classes.

Career Goals: I would like to own a farm to produce food for the local island population and grow other high cost products like exotic fruits that can be sold in the international market.

Interesting Facts about you: I like to go birdwatching, climbing and camping in the outdoors.

Nolo Consulting Team





Dr. H. Nolo Martínez

Co-President

Dr. Nolo Martínez is the Founder and Co-President for Nolo Consulting, LLC. His areas of professional interest include the study of people's beliefs, attitudes, and values as the foundation to describe and explain organizational culture; integrating work from adult learning and development to plan, implement and evaluate adult education and early childhood education programs; and leadership development in diverse and immigrant communities.

A bilingual adult educator, Nolo has worked for more than 25 years to build bridges between immigrant and diverse populations and existing communities in North Carolina. He uses Discovery Learning's assessments to recognize diverse cultures and leadership styles, thereby building on organizations' collective strengths. This ensures that each organization's cultural diversity remains an asset (and not a barrier) to high performance.

He served as the first Director for Hispanic/Latino Affairs at the N.C. Office of the Governor. During his tenure, he led state efforts to develop Latino leadership and coordinated statewide initiatives to address the needs of the fastest growing Latino state in the United States. Nolo also developed North Carolina's AgrAbility Project to assist farmers, farm workers and their families when affected by disabilities.

He earned his doctorate in adult education from North Carolina State University, as well as a master's degree in economics from Rutgers University and a bachelor's degree in agronomy from the University of Puerto Rico.

Nolo was born in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico and raised in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico; he now lives in Vicksburg, Mississippi. He enjoys volunteering at local service agencies in the community, as well as playing tennis and long-distance running.



Maya McElrath

Co-President

Maya McElrath is the Co-President for Nolo Consulting, LLC with personal and professional experience in multi-cultural, diversity and socio-economic issues affecting early childhood education programs and the families served.

She has over 15 years of experience in social work settings and program administration. As a former Head Start employee and active participant with the North Carolina

Early Childhood Professional Development Regional Action Planning Committee, she is well abreast of the challenges early childhood education programs, their staff and clients face today.

Maya earned a master's degree in social work from East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina and a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Maya is considering pursuing a Ph.D. in demography or a related field to complement the extensive data research, collection and analysis that she conducts for clients nationwide.

Maya, originally from the Netherlands, was born in Guadalajara, Mexico. She has living experience in Venezuela, the Netherlands, Jordan and Cyprus, and moved to the United States in 1994. She enjoys spending time with her children and traveling with her friends and family.



Francisco (Frankie) Martínez Oronoz

Senior Program Director

Francisco (Frankie) Martínez-Oronoz is a Doctoral Candidate in International and Comparative Education at Florida State University. His research interests focus on Mindfulness-based intervention strategies for marginalized youth populations. He completed his master's degree in Public Affairs at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro with a concentration in Nonprofit Management and Leadership, as well as a bachelor's degree in Sociology with a concentration in Social Problems in a Global Society.

Frankie is also an AmeriCorps Alumni, where he worked with the ACCESS Project serving Greensboro North Carolina's refugee community. While in AmeriCorps, Frankie coordinated mentoring programs and values-based after-school programs for refugee youth. Prior to his AmeriCorps experience, Frankie worked with street youth at IPODERAC, a self-sustaining boys orphanage in Puebla, Mexico. In addition to numerous other international projects, he has worked with Cantera, a humanitarian NGO in Managua, Nicaragua where he developed a stronger youth program by facilitating the program's strategic plan.

Frankie was born in Puerto Rico and currently lives in Raleigh, North Carolina, heading the Hispanic Farmer Outreach Efforts in the Southeast United States.



Patricia A. Morales Martínez

Program Manager

Patricia A. Morales graduated from The Sacred Heart University in Puerto Rico completing a bachelor's degree in Communications with a major in Advertising. Patricia worked for three years at an advertising agency and her expertise include: sales, customer service, recruiting, talent management, marketing, promotions, coordination and project/event management.

In the past Patricia has participated and conducted promotional work with companies like Samsung and Coca-Cola, as well as multiple automobile brands and private labels native to Puerto Rico.

Patricia currently lives in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico. In her free time, she loves going to the beach, exploring her island, traveling abroad and spending time with the family and friends.

USDA-NRCS Liaisons

USDA NRCS Liaison

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State Resource Conservationist

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