

Special Report

NUESTRO FUTURO



The 2014 Latino Education Conference took place on November 20 in our nation's capital following a midterm election in which the Latino vote played an important role. LATINO Magazine's fifth annual event brought together several hundred Latino opinion leaders and students at the Capital Hilton a few blocks from the White House.

Participants included executives from companies such as ExxonMobil, GM, and Lockheed Martin (see below); members of the



Rainia Washington and Alfredo Estrada

Obama Administration; representatives from the U.S. Armed Forces; students from Cesar Chavez Public Policy Charter School in Washington, DC and High Point High School in Beltsville, MD; and Latino nonprofits such as the Hispanic



Rep. Joaquin Castro

Heritage Foundation (HHF). One common thread running through the panels and roundtable discussions throughout the day was the need for outreach to encourage Latinos to enter the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

“Many more companies are talking the talk,” said LATINO Publisher Alfredo Estrada as he opened the conference. “But sometimes they’re only talking to themselves, so the message has not gotten through to the Latino community. The purpose of our NUESTRO FUTURO initiative is to spread the word about STEM through Latino media.”

NUESTRO FUTURO
 2014
LATINO
EDUCATION
CONFERENCE
 NOVEMBER 20, 2014 • WASHINGTON, DC



Panelists Panel One *Partnerships in STEM* (l-r) Ivonne Diaz-Claisse, Ruby Longoria, Susan Santana, and Eddie Gonzalez

Students in the morning sessions were welcomed by Rainia Washington, VP of Culture, Diversity and Equal Opportunity Programs at Lockheed Martin, who outlined the challenge faced by companies such as hers: “We’re finding that often students just have not been introduced to the types of education and skills needed to fill STEM positions. This problem is one we adults sometimes call ‘the skills gap.’ What’s more, studies also show that there’s a real shortage of minorities and women going into these science and technology-related fields. So not only are we seeing a shortage of students like you pursuing STEM careers, we’re seeing a lack of



Charlie Ericksen and Patricia Guadalupe

diversity in what we call the ‘pipeline.’”

This need to bridge the skills gap, and how it can be done, was a central theme in the morning panels. The first was entitled “Partnerships in STEM” and featured Ivonne Diaz-Claisse, president of HISPA; Eddie Gonzalez, NASA; Ruby Longoria, Microsoft; and Susan Santana, AT&T. Following the



Samuel Ortiz, ExxonMobil



Panelists Panel Two *Filling the Pipeline in STEM* (l-r) Maj. Alberto Meza, Angela Arboleda, Nora Rincon, and Nelson Perez



Speaker Lawrence Romo and Maj. Alberto Meza

panel, participants heard from an outstanding leader in the public sector: Lawrence Romo, Director of the Selective Service System. Romo delivered to students the message that young men must register with the Selective Service System upon their 18th birthday. The second panel was “Filling the Pipeline in STEM” and featured Angela Arboleda, Herbalife; Major Alberto Meza, USAF; Nora Rincon, GM; and Nelson Perez, National Grid.

Lunch was served in the historic Congressional Ballroom, and featured several guest speakers including Rocky Egusquiza, VP of Community Affairs, Hispanic



Dalai Almanza-Smith and Rep. Joaquin Castro

Enterprises & Content at NBCUniversal, who described her program to promote STEAM (STEM plus the arts and entertainment) education called *Aprender es Triunfar* and



Capt. Andres Delgado

presented PSAs featuring José Diaz Balart and Vanessa Hauc. Samuel Ortiz spoke on behalf of luncheon sponsor ExxonMobil. A native of Mexico, Samuel is the president of the ExxonMobil Latino employee network GOAL.

Guests then heard from a representative of the Obama Administration, Frances Colon, Deputy Science and Technology Adviser to the Secretary of State. Antonio Tijerino, CEO of the Hispanic Heritage Foundation, introduced Rafael Lopez, Senior Policy Advisor at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. Keynote remarks were



Students from Cesar Chavez and High Point High School



delivered by rising political star Rep. Joaquin Castro, whose twin brother Julian is Secretary of HUD. Rep. Castro briefed the guests on upcoming legislative developments in the newly elected Congress, and previewed Obama’s dramatic announcement that evening of executive action on immigration.

It was an exciting end to NUESTRO FUTURO, our fifth annual Latino Education Conference. Many



(l-r) Dalia Almanza-Smith, Rocky Egusquiza, Alfredo Estrada, Vanessa Garcia and Shalimar Alio

thanks to our partners at ExxonMobil, GM, Lockheed Martin, Microsoft, Comcast NBCUniversal Telemundo, UC Davis, Herbalife, Selective Service System, USAF, Coast Guard, National Grid, Cigna, ETS, AT&T and NASA for their support, and to all who attended, including teachers and students. ¡Gracias!

