



Speech - Outstanding Chapter Award for Innovative Science. UF SACNAS

Good evening, everyone,

On behalf of the SACNAS chapter at the University of Florida, I stand here deeply honored and grateful to accept the Innovative Science Award. This recognition celebrates a belief we hold dear: that science is not just for a few but for all of us, and that when we welcome diverse voices into STEM, we unlock new dimensions of creativity, discovery, and possibility.

In the past year, we've seen this belief come to life. When we hosted the first-ever 3-Minute Thesis Competition en Español, students presented their research in their own or family language—a powerful moment that showed us science isn't confined by language or borders. This experience strengthened not only their communication skills but also their confidence, demonstrating that when we honor our cultures, we elevate our science.

In our CV-building workshops, we gave students tools to craft their paths forward. For many, it was about much more than resumes; it was about seeing themselves as future scientists, as contributors to the field, equipped to succeed. Through SACNAS tailgates, language exchanges, and the Viva Museum event, we bridged UF with our local Gainesville community, sparking conversations about representation and making science accessible to all.

And at events like Girls Do Science!, we saw young girls light up with the realization that they, too, could be part of this journey—that science is for them. But we also had other participants who could see the reach and impact of women in STEM. These moments reminded us that fostering diversity in STEM is not just about numbers but creating a space where everyone sees a future for themselves.

This award honors our members, our supporters, and all those who believe that science thrives when we stand together. It's proof that diverse perspectives make science more powerful and that our commitment to inclusivity is a cornerstone of innovation.

To our UF SACNAS community, Student Government, and our two incredible advisors (Mariela Pajuelo and Joseph Ryan) who have been supporting our chapter since our beginning in 2017, thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we are building a STEM community where everyone belongs, where everyone has a voice, and where everyone's contributions matter. And to everyone here, let's continue this work together. Each of us has the power to create a better future where the STEM doors are open to all.

Thank you.

**Claudia Garnica &
Natalia Padillo**