



ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION

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Lorelle Espinosa to Join Alfred P. Sloan Foundation as Director of Programs for Diversity in STEM Higher Education

Twenty-year higher education veteran will succeed Elizabeth S. Boylan

(New York, NY) – The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation announces that Dr. Lorelle Espinosa will join the Foundation as Program Director, where she will lead the Foundation’s grantmaking programs aimed at advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in STEM Higher Education. Dr. Espinosa is currently Vice President for Research at the American Council on Education. She will succeed Dr. Elizabeth S. Boylan, who has led the Foundation’s DEI grantmaking since 2011 and who is retiring in December 2020.

In her position as program director for the Foundation’s DEI programs, Espinosa will oversee and set strategic priorities for an annual grant portfolio of nearly \$7 million to address the historic underrepresentation of Blacks/African Americans, Latinx, American Indians/Alaska Natives, and women in STEM disciplines and economics in higher education. Current Foundation initiatives in this area include the Minority PhD program, which supports nine University Centers of Exemplary Mentoring (UCEM) nationwide. UCEMs provide fellowships, peer and faculty mentoring, and networking and professional development resources aimed at helping graduate students from underrepresented groups successfully complete graduate study in STEM fields. Espinosa will also oversee the Sloan Indigenous Graduate Partnership, a Sloan initiative that partners with eight U.S. campuses to help meet the specific needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students, enabling them to pursue advanced degrees in STEM while continuing to participate meaningfully in tribal life.

“The Sloan Foundation’s deep connections within the STEM community, its longstanding commitment to equity and inclusion, and its insistence on evidence-based approaches to reform makes it uniquely positioned to have an impact on STEM higher education,” said Espinosa. “I am honored

and excited to join Sloan and work with both my new colleagues and Sloan's grantees towards our common goal of a higher education system that is more inclusive, more effective, and more equitable.”

As Vice President for Research at the American Council on Education, Espinosa was responsible for building the organization's research portfolio with special emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion; for promoting innovation and data use to close equity gaps; and for helping shape the national conversation around issues of access to and success in higher education for diverse populations. She is the author of an influential study of how recent legal jurisprudence is changing race-conscious policies in education and is PI of a national study on [the state of race and ethnicity in higher education](#). Espinosa served as co-chair of the National Academies' study committee that produced the report, [Minority Serving Institutions: America's Underutilized Resource for Strengthening the STEM Workforce](#), and has spent much of her career focused on DEI in STEM education with an early emphasis on women of color in these fields. Espinosa earned her Ph.D. in higher education and organizational change from the University of California, Los Angeles; her bachelor of arts from the University of California, Davis; and her associate of arts from Santa Barbara City College.

“Lorelle Espinosa has an impressive record as a change-maker in education,” says Dr. Adam F. Falk, president of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. “She is an influential scholar, a passionate advocate for diversity and equity in education, and a gifted collaborator with a proven record of building effective partnerships that result in real change. We are excited that she will be joining the Sloan family to lead our efforts to make higher education more diverse, equitable, and inclusive for all.”

Dr. Espinosa will begin work at the Foundation over the summer. She will succeed Dr. Elizabeth S. Boylan, who has led the Foundation's diversity, equity, and inclusion grantmaking since 2011 and who will retire in December 2020. Prior to joining Sloan, Boylan worked for 16 years at Barnard College where she was Provost and Dean of the Faculty and professor of Biological Sciences. During her tenure at Sloan, Boylan was the primary architect of the Foundation's UCEM strategy, which has engaged faculty mentors and academic leaders in diversifying their doctoral student populations in engineering, the physical sciences, and mathematics. Grants to selected universities were made contingent on significant institutional matching funds and commitments to institutionalize strategies for successful student recruitment, retention, and graduation. Boylan also spearheaded an initiative inside the Foundation to ensure that issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion were addressed by all Foundation grants. Dr. Boylan expressed her pleasure in “passing the baton” to her successor. “Running the race as head of the Sloan DEI program is not like any other track-and-field event I know of. It requires both the nimble feet of a relay runner and the stamina and persistence of a marathoner. I am confident Lorelle Espinosa has honed these skills, and more, and will lead with focus and imagination.”

Sloan president Adam Falk spoke of the impact of Dr. Boylan's career. “Higher education is better today—more fair, more inclusive, more welcoming—because of Liz Boylan. The Sloan Foundation is also better today—more fair, more inclusive, more welcoming—because of Liz Boylan. We will miss her as a colleague and as a friend.”

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Media Contact: Nate Williams, Communications Manager, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
917-740-8223
williams@sloan.org

Photo of Dr. Lorelle Espinosa: <https://sloan.org/storage/app/media/staff/espinosa-lorelle.jpg>

Photo of Dr. Elizabeth S. Boylan: <https://sloan.org/storage/app/media/staff/Liz-Boylan.jpg>

Photo of Dr. Adam F. Falk: <https://sloan.org/storage/app/media/staff/Falk-headshot-hi-res.png>

The **Alfred P. Sloan Foundation** is a not-for-profit, mission-driven grantmaking institution dedicated to improving the welfare of all through the advancement of scientific knowledge. Founded in 1934 by industrialist Alfred P. Sloan Jr., the Foundation makes grants each year in three broad areas: direct support of research in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and economics; initiatives to increase the quality and diversity of scientific institutions; and efforts to enhance and deepen public engagement with science and scientists. Sloan Foundation grantmaking helped create some of the country's most prestigious and enduring scientific institutions, including Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, the MIT Sloan School of Management, and the Sloan Digital Sky Survey. Sloan support has also played a critical role in the early development of many scientific fields, including cognitive science, behavioral economics, and indoor microbial ecology. The Foundation strives to be guided in all its actions by the values of the scientific enterprise: impartiality, empiricism, curiosity, rigor, and the conviction that a reasoned, systematic understanding of the forces of nature and society, when applied inventively and wisely, can lead to a better world for all.