

Dr. Michelle Sanchez appointed as the New Associate Dean for Community Engagement and Academic Partnerships

January 29th, 2025

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Matthew Deinhardt

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Dr. Michelle Sanchez, Director of the Tulane Center for K-12 STEM Education was appointed Associate Dean for Community Engagement and Academic Partnerships, effective January 15, 2025.

Dean Rajan is excited to announce that Dr. Michelle Sanchez has been appointed as the New Associate Dean for Community Engagement and Academic Partnerships, effective January 15.

As Associate Dean for Community Engagement and Academic Partnerships, Dr. Sanchez will focus on several key initiatives including Careers and Professional Development, K-12 STEM Outreach Programs, Rapid Growth of Engineering Undergraduate Programs, and Compliance with ABET Accreditation Standards.

With her work in Careers and Professional Development, Dr. Sanchez will forge strategic relationships with industry, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations to create internship, co-op, and employment opportunities for SSE students. She will collaborate with faculty and career services to integrate professional development components into academic programs, including workshops, seminars, and networking events. Dr. Sanchez will also develop and support mentoring programs that connect students with alumni and industry professionals, providing guidance on career pathways and professional growth.

Dr. Sanchez will also ensure Compliance with ABET Accreditation Standards as she works with all accredited programs in SSE to ensure they meet the criteria set by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). This includes coordinating the preparation of self-study reports, organizing site visits for ABET accreditation cycles with SSE departments, and overseeing the process of addressing feedback from ABET to continuously improve program quality and student outcomes. She will encourage adoption of robust assessment tools and continuous improvement processes to effectively measure student learning outcomes.

Dr. Sanchez will also remain the Director of the [Tulane Center for K-12 STEM Education](#) and continue to bring national and international distinction and recognition to K-12 outreach work being performed at the Tulane School of Science and Engineering.

Dr. Sanchez has worked with graduate and undergraduate students extensively for the last 12 years through the Center's outreach programs and as a faculty member in the Physics and Engineering Physics Department. She is thrilled that her new role will allow her to assist and empower students to obtain internships and research opportunities before graduation as well as prepare them to launch successful early careers after graduation.

"Dr. Sanchez's experience as a faculty member and as a leader have uniquely prepared her to take on this role in SSE. Congratulations, Michelle! Thank you for stepping in to serve in this role," remarked Dean Rajan.

When Dr. Sanchez joined the faculty of Tulane in 2012, the K-12 STEM Outreach Program brought about 50 high school students annually to campus through the Tulane Science Scholars Program. When she took over as Director of the Center for K-12 STEM Education in 2013, the number of students brought to campus through Center programming increased by over 400%.

Now, more than 10 years later, the Center impacts 1000 students and 200 teachers on campus and another 800 local public-school students at their own schools annually. The participants in Center programming come from 150 different schools each year where 74% of all students served by the Center receive free or reduced-price lunch. In addition, through hosting the Greater New Orleans Science and Engineering at Tulane, being involved in hosting the middle and high school FIRST Robotics tournaments for the state of Louisiana, and participating in STEM community programs, the Center impacts 5000 students annually.

In all of her outreach work, Dr. Sanchez's focus has always been on making all programs accessible to all students especially local Louisiana students. The Center annually buses 200 students to Center events at no cost to the students or schools. The Center also provided over \$270,000 in financial-need scholarships in summer 2024, enabling students to participate in SSE's credit and enrichment high school summer courses. "Providing equity of access to our local students is paramount," says Dr. Sanchez. She is truly responsible for the modern K-12 STEM Center that we have today. From working as the solo bricklayer of the Center's foundation in the early days, to now leading a team of four while expanding its reach across not only the greater New Orleans-area but at the national and international level as well.

As a native New Orleanian and alumna of Tulane, she holds these programs and these massive successes in progress close to heart. This impactful work is not just a job for her; it's about really making a difference in the lives of students in the community. Dr. Sanchez's face lights up as she speaks about one particular student, Swathi, who she met when she was participating in the inaugural Girls in STEM at Tulane (GiST) event as a 6th grader. Swathi then went on to participate in the Greater New Orleans Science and Engineering Fair and enroll multiple summers in the Tulane Science Scholars Program when in high school. Swathi was then accepted to Tulane and took multiple classes with Dr. Sanchez including both tiers of service learning and as well as core engineering courses required for her degree and an electrical engineering elective course. During her time as an undergraduate student, Swathi provided over 200 volunteer hours with the Center giving back to the very same programs that sparked her own interest in STEM. Swathi went on to graduate from Tulane in Biomedical Engineering, is now pursuing her Master's Degree in Electrical Engineering, and has truly been influenced throughout a decade of her life by Dr. Sanchez's guidance.



Dr. Sanchez earned her Bachelor of Science in Engineering in Computer Engineering and Mathematics from Tulane University and served as her class of 2004 valedictorian. She decided to stay on at Tulane and achieve her Masters of Science in Electrical Engineering in 2005. Dr. Sanchez received her Doctoral Degree in Electrical Engineering from Stanford University in 2011.

The School of Science and Engineering is thrilled for Dr. Sanchez's new position and is eager to follow her bold, tenacious leadership through Tulane School of Science and Engineering's next chapter! She is a true community leader and inspires not only Tulanians across the nation, but New Orleanians here in our backyard. We are grateful for Dr. Sanchez's far-reaching success!