

Spring 2021 Alumni Spotlight

Dina Verdin



Dr. Dina Verdín received a BS in Industrial and Systems Engineering from San José State University in 2013. She then went on to Purdue University where she completed an MS in Industrial Engineering and a PhD in Engineering Education. As a Purdue graduate student, Dina was a National Science Foundation's Graduate Research Fellow and an Honorable Mention for the Ford Foundation Fellowship Program. Of note is that her dissertation proposal was selected as part of the top 3 in the 2018 American Educational Research Association (AERA) Division D In-Progress Research Gala.

Dr. Verdín's research has been recognized in multiple venues. Her 2020 research was selected to receive Honorable Mention for the Best Paper Award in the ASCE Journal of Civil Engineering Education, she was a finalist in the 2020 Best Diversity Paper in ASEE's Educational Research and Methods Division (ERM), and was a 2018 ASEE/IEEE Frontiers in Education Conference Best Diversity Paper Award recipient. Her research interests focus on changing the deficit base perspective of first-generation college students by providing asset-based approaches to understanding this population. Dr. Verdín is interested in understanding how first-generation college students author their identities as engineers and negotiate their multiple identities in the current culture of engineering.

When she's not focusing on her research agenda or teaching classes, she's outside discovering the hiking trails around the Phoenix metro area.

Dina has provided this personal statement regarding the development of her career path:

When I was an undergrad at SJSU, I was heavily involved on campus. I joined a ton of organizations and participated in a number of activities. I thought I wanted to go to graduate school to study student affairs but I wasn't ready to leave all my engineering training behind. Once I knew I wanted to go to graduate school I applied to the McNair Scholars programs which is designed to prepare students to develop a competitive graduate application. The application process meant that I was tasked with figuring out my research interest. As a McNair Scholar I was also required to engage in research activity. My first research project was through an REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates) at the University of Cincinnati focused on Optimizing

Operations in Complex Semiconductor Manufacturing Processes. I have to admit semiconductor manufacturing wasn't my jam but the experience was invaluable as it was my first exposure to working in a lab, reading scholarly journal articles, synthesizing literature, and the overall process of discovery that comes with doing research. The idea of developing or building new knowledge fascinated me. I decided my next summer research project would be on a topic that was more connected to my interest. I sort of went back to the idea of student affairs but specifically focused on women in engineering. My second research project focused on understanding the experiences that lead a group of Latina first-generation college students to pursue engineering. At the time I was unaware that there was an entire School focused on training graduates to conduct research engineering education but I went ahead with my study feeling that this was the connection with engineering and student affairs that I was looking for. Soon after I learned about Purdue's Engineering Education PhD program, I applied and was admitted.

Dina Verdín, PhD

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More information about Engineering Education Systems & Design (EESD) PhD Program <https://poly.engineering.asu.edu/engineering/phd/>