

# Undergraduate Student Participates in Hispanic College Fund's Annual Gala

*Lucía Díaz was one of 24 students from across the country to attend*



**Lucía Díaz**, a senior in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science in *The Henry Samueli*

*School of Engineering*, was one of 24 students from across the U.S. who traveled to Washington, D.C., to participate in the 18th Annual Hispanic College Fund (HCF) Gala in October 2011.



Díaz competed in a nationwide essay contest around the theme, "What are your impressions of Latino and non-Latino American unity?" Her essay spoke on her belief that we should inspire our communities to appreciate the nation's diversity through dialogue and education in order to create solutions to today's issues and to confront future challenges. The winning students toured Washington and attended a congressional staff luncheon discussing Latinos and diversity in D.C.

"HCF provides not only financial support, but a source of valuable, practical information through their networking opportunities, webinars, telephone interviews and surveys," says Diaz. "HCF cares about students at a personal level. They take the time to provide us with quality support in an effort to make our college lives more productive and successful."

She has received scholarships through the Hispanic College Fund and is now participating in the first year of HCF's College and Career Institute, a retention program that serves as a one-stop resource center for financial, social and career support.

Díaz was born in Los Angeles and grew up in Mexicali, Mexico, where she attended high school. At age 21, she returned to continue her studies and to work as a computer technician at Imperial Valley College in Imperial, Calif., before transferring to UC Irvine in August 2010. She is the daughter of farm workers and is the first in her family to leave home and pursue her academic goals.



The computer engineering major has assisted in the labs of Professor **Martha L. Mecartney**, Ph.D., Department of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science, and Associate Professor **Ian G. Harris**, Ph.D., Department of Computer Science in the *Donald Bren School of Information and Computer Sciences*, as part of the University of California Leadership Excellence through Advanced Degrees (UC LEADS) program.

Díaz is working to create a non-profit organization designed to help recycle computer equipment and to make it available to students in need. She collects donated computer parts from individual donors to assemble computers for distribution to low-income children in the surrounding neighborhoods of Mexicali. Her goal is to grow the project by receiving larger donations from corporations through the creation of the non-profit organization.

She is an officer for the UC Irvine chapter of Mexican American Engineers and Scientists (MAES), a member of the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) and a member of the California Alliance for Minority Participation in Math, Science, and Engineering (CAMP) initiative.

The Hispanic College Fund Gala is an annual event held in Washington, D.C., to recognize the philanthropic achievements of business leaders and the outstanding accomplishments of students

in HCF programs.

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