



FUERTE

Field-based Undergraduate Engagement through Research, Teaching, and Education



With support from the Improving Undergraduate STEM Education program for Hispanic-Serving Institutions at NSF, the FUERTE program seeks to serve the national need for a well-prepared and diverse workforce in conservation and environmental sciences.

To support this aim, the project will implement inclusive mentoring, early and immersive exposure to field-based science and tools, and extensive professional skills development and career experiences.

This project expects to increase involvement of students, particularly for students from traditionally underserved groups in STEMP, in environmental sciences and contribute knowledge about the importance of field and research experiences in fostering careers in environmental science.

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FUERTE aims to surmount barriers to the involvement of Latinx students in the environmental sciences through inclusive mentoring, as well as early and immersive exposure to field-based research.

The specific aims of the project are to:

- 1) assist undergraduate students in making critical transitions in progressing towards an environmental sciences career;
- 2) engage undergraduate students in career and research opportunities in environmental sectors throughout their undergraduate career;
- 3) foster a sense of identity among students as environmental scientists;
- 4) explore how these interventions affect career choice, sense of identity, and perception of the role of environmental science in serving their community.

Specifically, this program intends to develop a sequence of research and professional development experiences relevant to conservation and environmental sciences that span all four years of undergraduate education. These experiences will include an intensive research experience, a methods-focused field trip, a career internship, a service-learning experience, as well as mentoring and career exposure.

The project will also support the development of courses and a mentoring framework that will persist within the university after the end of the funding, facilitating long-term increased participation of students, particularly diverse students, in environmental science. The knowledge generated in this project will help inform successful implementation of similar intervention efforts at other locations.



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