

THE SMITHSONIAN ASTROPHYSICAL OBSERVATORY LATINO INITIATIVE PROGRAM WITH DR RODOLFO MONTEZ JR. AND CHRISTINE CROWLEY

TALKING POINTS

KNOWLEDGE

1. What motivated Christine to set up the Latino Initiative Program?
2. What aspects of Rodolfo's life and career led to his involvement in inclusivity programmes?

COMPREHENSION

3. Why does the wider academic community, and not just the interns, benefit from the LIP?
4. Why are mentors important within the LIP?

APPLICATION

5. Computer programming forms a significant part of the internship. Can you think of some instances when this skill would be useful within astrophysics?
6. Rodolfo mentions that they run a crash course covering the language of astronomy. What do you think this course entails?

ANALYSIS

7. Why do you think STEM areas such as physics and maths suffer from a lack of diversity more so than areas such as biology?
8. Why do you think that some older scientists may not engage with encouraging inclusivity?

SYNTHESIS

9. How would you encourage academics to engage with inclusivity and diversity? Can you think of any evidence you might need?

EVALUATION

10. "The best research programs are always the most diverse programs," says Christine. To what extent do you agree with this?

ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO AT HOME OR IN THE CLASSROOM

Rodolfo mentions that STEM has become a lot more diverse within the last couple of decades, but that there is a lot of work still to do. Using the internet for background research, design a poster that explains:

- Why the STEM community is not representative of the broader population.
- Why diversity and inclusivity are important and useful for STEM.
- How inclusivity has improved in recent decades within STEM, including pioneering people and organisations that have brought about these improvements.
- How inclusivity can be further improved through e.g. outreach and innovative programs.
- A case study (other than the LIP) that shows a successful example of improving inclusivity.

Make sure your poster is eye-catching and presents the information in an easily understandable way. Present it to your class and ask them for their feedback.

MORE RESOURCES

- This website has a useful list of astrophysics internships available in Europe, North America, and the rest of the world:
<https://astrophysicsgirl.com/internships/>
- This site provides resources to help educate those in the astronomy field about the importance of diversity:
<https://www.astrobetter.com/wiki/Diversity>
- This video fills you in on what to expect from a degree in astrophysics or astronomy:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYsflotpyG4>